MY BROTHER'S FACE

DHAN GOPAL MUKERJI

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MY BROTHER'S FACE

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

CASTE AND OUTCAST

The story of the author's youth in India and his experiences as a student in the United States.

"We ought to have a book like this written by a chosen youth from every nation in the world—by a young man who, like Mr. Mukerji, represents the best in his own tradition and who has a gift for words."—*The Tribune.*

E. P. DUTTON & CO.

MY BROTHER'S FACE

BY

DHAN GOPAL MUKERJI

AUTHOR OF

"CASTE AND OUTCAST," "KARI THE ELEPHANT," ETC.

NEW YORK

E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY

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MY BROTHER'S FACE

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CHAPTER I

THE RETURN

IT is the unwritten law of every Hindu that he shall revisit the place of his birth at least once in twelve years. Did our sages formulate this law from a profound knowledge of the soul's need? I cannot say; but it is true that I, a Brahmin, after many years of wandering in foreign lands, grew conscious of a longing for my home, which reached its climax in very nearly twelve years after my departure from India. I had spent hard outcast years in America, followed by years when I was admitted within the precincts of Western caste; I had traveled in England, France and Norway, and had felt everywhere a deepening fellowship with men, but instead of lessening, these human contacts intensified, the emptiness that surged within me. Was this because I read in the eyes turned to mine some reflection of my own poverty of soul? Was it that Western men and women were seeking, though perhaps unconsciously, a freedom of the spirit from the burdens

heaped upon it by a century of progress? Then in a flash it came to me that I might find in the age-old peace of India some balm of healing for other minds as well as for my own.

One day, in the winter of 1920-21, as I was mounting the lecture platform of the New York Town Hall, I looked into the faces of my audience and into my own heart, and found with consternation that I was a man without a message. Then through confusion came the clear summons, "Go to India, and at the feet of Holiness renew thy spirit!"

So almost literally with the begging bowl, I set forth upon the ancient pilgrimage of my race in search of Holiness.

The ship I took was a small vessel filled with tradesmen and pleasure-seekers going to India, whose conversation revolved around what to see in the shortest time, what to buy, and how to uphold the dignity of the Nordic race. Fortunately, among them were one scholar and some missionaries who spoke of other things.

It was in miniature a continuation of the civilization I had left, and the talk amongst us reiterated certain aspects of the Occident. This is a book of talk, for all the East talks, especially Bengalis like myself, revealing its soul through the spoken word.

There was the Tradesman, the dominating figure of the West; how well he filled his rôle when he said, "Christianity is a religion of slaves and southern races. We Nordics are above it. Our religion is to conquer and to rule. I have lived in the Orient long enough to know that it is a country of slaves."

"I agree with you," I said. "Christ belongs to us, and not to you, Mr. Tradesman."

Here the quiet Scholar would have protested, but the Pleasure-Seeker caught him in mid-sentence.

"We are Christians," he said, "as our friend here is a Hindu. I believe he and I will both go to the same Heaven."

Tolerance was natural to a man whose only religion was pleasure, but at his remark, the Missionary could not contain himself. He explained that the Pleasure-Seeker's speech was sacrilege. As the wrangle grew more heated, the Tradesman's lips quivered in anger.

"You missionaries are undermining our supremacy in the East. Pretty soon the Orientals will be asking equality with us; that is Christian all right; but where will the white man be then? We Nordic races are the masters of the earth, and we intend to remain so!"

The remark thrilled me. This Tradesman, at least, had a clear notion of what he wanted.

"But there were other races who, if I may say so, ruled the world in their time," said the Scholar, at last making himself heard. "If you dig deep into the earth you will find that this masterfulness, as you call it, has been in the possession of races that were not Nordics—the Romans, now 'Dagos,' Alexander and Ptolemy, the ancestors of the Greek bootblacks, and Darius and Chandrokotta, the Hindu; southerners all, ruling great empires once, yet to-day I have to burrow deep into strata of dirt to find any evidence of their masterfulness. I am afraid, Mr. Tradesman, the greatness of the Nordic race and its inherent right to rule other races is purely temporary. Ah, gentlemen," he ended, "if you would only study archeology, you would find yourselves unburdened and set free from notions that are like stones, more heavy than happy."

"Just the same," repeated the Tradesman obstinately, "if I had my way, I'd pass a law forbidding traffic in religion, and equality of races."

That last remark of the Tradesman's turned the tide of my feelings in favor of the Missionary; for he was going to my country to offer her his God and not to take her gold. Men and women brave enough to face an alien race and alien climate, not to make money but to bring back to God what they think is His—men's souls—in spite

of their opinion of my religion and its prophets—have the right to go to India—the supreme right to bring another religion to the Mother of many religions.

At this point, the group broke up, only the Scholar remaining to ask me the date of the Hymn of Creation from the Rig Veda. He was bent on dating the dateless, but I would only quote:

"Who was there?
For there was nothing
Since all things were.
Even the intangible spaces of the upper air were not.
What covered creation?
Whence came it?
What wilderness of waters clamored and charged like black bulls?
Then there was no death,
For immortality had not yet been dreamt of.
Darkness within darkness spun like discs.
There was no moon,
Nor was yet lit the beacon of day.
In that running chaos, who uttered the golden cry of creation?
Who knows it?
How dare we speak of it!
Are not the Gods who are older than we silent?
And yet it is here, this dance of Light around us.

It is like a base of fire
Resting upon—what?
Ah He, the Ultimate, is witness of all;
But the moment we say, 'He knows,'
He may not know!"

"I don't like your translation. It is fanciful," the Scholar remarked, and tried me on another subject. "Can you tell me whether all India has accepted the theory that an Italian adventurer built the Taj Mahal?"

"Why should we accept a soldier of fortune's contention set down in two lines in an unimportant diary?" said I.

"But Western observers don't dispute what the Italian said about building the Taj," he retorted.

"You ought to read what Indian art critics and archeologists think about their own works of art!" I answered, not without heat. "You are welcome to an Occidental's write-up of the Orient, but I, as an Oriental, abide by the write-up of my civilization by my own people."

But the Scholar was a real scholar. He took no offense at my vehemence. He was a sweet soul, and made some allowance, I think, for my condition of burning homesickness. All this talk had not checked the undercurrent of my anticipation, and now I could almost see the evening sky of India burn like a peacock's throat, and I pictured

to myself long processions of stately elephants fourscore at a time, caparisoned in cloth of gold, their silver bells, hanging from silver chains, ringing in the cool dusk as they passed houses with marble porticos where fountains sobbed in the swift twilight, where white-vestured men and women sat still and meditated on Silence—that heart-beat of God. I could almost see their faces. Was not one of them the face of my brother? It was as clear to me as my own. I thought of those brown faces as I had once known them, calm, clear, unashamed, and, above all, free from any lines save those marked by growth and age. Thus I thought of my brother, and the more I thought the greater the gladness that filled my spirit.

But like a warning against these imaginings, the Scholar now said:

"You will find India greatly changed."

At this juncture my friend the Missionary rejoined us and reported that he had been absent from the East only a short time, and he could assure me that modern progress, new ideas, and political upheaval had swept away in a decade many of the old beliefs and customs. "In short," he said cheerfully, "India is a new country."

Some rumors of this kind had reached me in America, which, however, had failed to impress me, and now I protested.

"But nothing can dim India's spirituality—it is age-old. Has not the world turned always eastward at its moments of prayer?"

To myself I said, "These men are not India's sons; they cannot see what I shall see, the Changeless behind the face of change."

That face of change I did, indeed, look upon in India, and tremendous contrasts, sometimes heart-breaking, between the new life and the old. It was a kaleidoscope where pattern seemed lost in variety; but what I saw and heard I shall report simply, and the reader may judge for himself whether or not I found anything in the East which he will care to remember after the brief notice he may have given these pages.

It was a reassurance and a relief beyond words, when, after twenty days of this talk, a tall, bearded, eagle-eyed Arabian gentleman boarded the ship at Port Said. To see an Oriental at last, was like meeting a brother, and I clung to his society until we reached Bombay. It was an added joy to me to find that Arabi spoke Hindustani fluently, his mother having been a native of India. Though a Mohammedan, he was an ardent follower of Gandhi.

"The poignard, brother," he said, "needs must abide in its own sheath. Gandhi is the sheath for all Asiatic souls; for each one of us there is a

nestling place in him. Gandhi said to me, 'Fear not. He who fears, hates. He who hates, kills. Thou wilt break thy sword and throw it away, and fear cannot come near thee.' How could I resist him, brother? Can one resist the thunderbolt of truth?"

This was pure gold to me, and when in his talk he flooded me with beautiful Oriental epithets, it was like a deluge from heaven after an age of drought. I bathed in names such as Soul of Excellence, Thou Jewel of Speech, Thou very Self of Felicity, drawing the line only at "O Thou Bride of Truth," which surprised him very much. I explained that I had been long in the West where speech was bare.

"That must be a curious race," he exclaimed in stupefaction. "What hardness of mind? Not to call a man speaking good words at least a 'star flinger!' When the marvel of speech waxeth in power on a man's tongue, what jeweled words of praise do those people use?"

I thought a moment. "In America, it would be, 'Aw, g'wan! Can the talk!' "

"Make clear to me this meaning, brother," Arabi exclaimed.

"It is untranslatable," I replied discreetly. "But I can tell you what I heard a man call his wife in that country."

"Let me have the pearl of utterance."

"In the West," said I, "brevity is the soul of wit. The man called his beloved, 'Honey!'"

Arabi savored the word carefully. "Too small, brother," he commented sadly. "Too small to be either brief or witty. Nay, it passeth my understanding. Even love cannot set fire to their tongue. What dumbness!"

The old proverb says that God gave the Chinaman the cunning of his hands, the Frenchman the cunning of his head, and the Arab the fire of utterance.

Apart from his love of picturesque speech which is the common heritage of every Oriental, Arabi had an amazing amount of folk-poetry stored in his memory. He kept me enthralled during those eleven days that we traveled together. But he was never to be found either at the moment of sunrise or at sunset. When I asked him why, he explained: "I spend those hours in prayer, for Allah must be thanked each day anew, that all souls on this ship may have a safe journey," and he recited:

"Either in ocean or on land,
Or in the arms of thy lightning-braided
bride—the cloud,
Thou canst not escape from death,
All the time O Talib (seeker), search after
God,

Shoulder thy terrible burden of God-quest.
Brighter than gems,
Swifter than the thunderbolt,
Is the upholder of the worlds,—
The stealer of strength who bestows strength,
God of all Gods;
Higher than the highest
Feeder and food that sustains all creation,
Is the Overlord;
The Supreme Witness,
The Dancer behind the sun,
The Hand that raises the spears of the peaks,
Fasten thy mind on Him
As a Tiger its claws on a hind!"

In the course of his talk he told me that he was a pearl fisher.

"Whenever I need money," he said, "I gather my tribe together and plunge down in certain places in the Red Sea. We gather enough pearls in four weeks to pay our modest expenses for at least six months. Then, O Heart of Worth, I go wandering through India, Persia, and Arabia, listening and gathering songs.

"Have you ever thought of cornering the pearl market?" I asked.

"Cornering what?" he questioned me brusquely.

"In the far Western countries, if a man knew

where the jewel of the sea hid in her nest of oyster shells, he would bring all his tribe thither, anchor their boats there for years until every pearl was garnered into his shops. Then he would sell at whatever price pleased his fancy."

"I am neither a Christian nor a Jew, brother. The pearl to me is a whim—and I seek it when the greater whim of hunger drives me on. When I am fed, I spend the extra money listening to song. The face of life is but a mask that hides death. Listen to the peasant poet:

" 'Learn it, learn it well, the world is a dream
and all its floating forms are but dust of dreams.
This body that we feed with perfume is more ephemeral than a flower's flaming end.
All our possessions are shackles that bind more strongly than poverty.
Money, fortune, youth, and lustiness are drawn as caravans into their desert-death.' "

"Do Mohammedans and Hindus often sing the same songs?" I asked.

"Why not?" he answered. "Men's religions may differ, but a Bedouin from the Arabian desert and a man from the bank of the Gunga sing alike; the heart is the same though words and even the

passions are different. I have found the oneness of song from Delhi to Alexandria. Hindu or Mohammedan, when his heart is broken, wails out the same tune. My vocation is to fish for pearls, shy as a bride. When I am not diving into the sea in search of them, I listen to singers and learn their songs. For, brother, song is like milk that is needed every day," and he recited:

"Purify thy heart so that it can be the vessel
of His silence;
Oh, man, thou who hast the might to do
this,
Worship openly as the tree doth the breeze;
Go forth naked like a sword and cut through
the flesh of the world,
Stop not till thou reachest God!"

The song was like an overture, for hardly had he finished it, when a steward rushed in to announce to both of us that we could now see the shores of India. It was overwhelming. I embraced Arabi. His eyes were full of tears. But when I was about to hasten on deck to behold the coast line, he restrained me.

"Not yet, brother. Let the Westerners finish their seeing first. We are India's sons; our eyes are different from theirs. Let us behold her differently."

CHAPTER II

A HINDU SHRINE

INDIA at last! The hills of the western Ghauts gleamed so intensely emerald that it hurt one's eyes to look at them. This afternoon of late May throbbed with colors clean and brilliant—russet and gold, purple and green, cerise and blue, alternated and mixed with one another as we drew closer to the wharf. Suddenly, all these warm colors—warm and vivid like the day—took supple and fully defined form. The ebbing and flowing currents of iridescence burning the strand, shaped themselves into Indian women walking slowly back and forth, drawing about them the long flowing ends of their saris. It was not a city but a fairies' paradise, that had come out to the sea-front to take the evening air. Thus I beheld India once more. In my country when one is enchanted he cries, "What word!"—as though to beg the God of Poetry, "O give me power to describe it."

I had given Arabi a final embrace and was ready

like a tethered and restive hound tugging at the chain. As the boat was moored and made fast the crowds ashore shouted, *"Gandhiki Jai!"*

"What does that mean?" I asked Arabi.

"They are giving thanks for the safe arrival of the boat at this shore," he answered.

"But they shouted, 'Victory to Gandhi!' " I said still puzzled. I had returned to India in the very midst of the Gandhi ferment and during my first week, I found that the sound of his name rang like a refrain to everything I did.

"Isn't Gandhi the voice of love and longing in them?" said Arabi, answering my question. "To shout for his victory is to acclaim the coming of God, brother." Then, "Farewell, farewell," he said, and it seemed to me that he dropped out of my life as a wind-blown autumn leaf in the jungle.

The next thing I remember is my brother's face. I gazed into his eyes and read there, not a man, but a continent. India, India, India—I took the dust from his feet. My elder brother—the head of our house now that my mother and father were no more—and I saluted him, putting my forehead on his feet. No word can describe my meeting with him after all these years of exile.

After we had bathed and dined our talk flowed, hour after hour, till suddenly the white bird of

dawn spread its wings and tore the throat of darkness with its burning silver talons; the night bled in floods of crimson for a few moments, and was gone.

As if a curtain had been lifted from before us, people and faces were suddenly revealed moving about as they do on the stage. Such is the effect of daybreak in India. It was only half-past five. By six o'clock the whole world was astir like ants about an ant-hill. We tried to snatch a few hours' sleep before making plans for a long pilgrimage. I wished to see some aspects of the changed political and economic conditions of my country, so, before leaving Bombay, it seemed best to take the opportunity to visit the heads of different political parties and study the condition of life among factory workers, before pursuing the personal interests that had brought me on my long journey across oceans and continents. I had also hoped to visit Gandhi in his prison, but my brother told me it would be impossible, as at that time the Mahatma refused to see even the visitors permitted him by the Government, and spent his days in fasting and meditation.

Since the cotton mills of India were all congregated in the city where we had spent the last twenty-four hours, we decided to plunge ourselves into the life of the mill districts first. It was near-

ing the sunset hour. We put on our best silk robes and went forth toward a Hindu temple to attend meditation and even-song. As the sun sank into rest the blue dusk, like winged silence, ran through the long dusty lanes that snaked their way between some buildings old enough to remind one of the tenth century, and others new enough to awaken a sense of horror toward all progress. Sometimes I saw beautiful seventeenth-century columns and porticos pulled down in order to widen the streets that two automobiles might go abreast. That sight brought to my mind most vividly the real conflict in India to-day: the best of the seventeenth century at war with the best of the twentieth—"modern progress slashing its way through the beauty and squalor of the Renaissance," as my brother expressed it.

Suddenly, we turned a corner and beheld the tall temple of ochre-colored stone leap like a golden red column into the deepening emerald dusk of the sky, while at its foot surged and pulsated the throng of worshipers clad in saffron and green and gold. They too were entering the temple for the even-song. Fearing that we would find no seats if we lingered, my brother and I entered the shrine, though I was longing to stay without, and feast my eyes on the phantasy of color that was fast sinking into the black silence of night.

Within, the odor of *dhoop* (incense) and *dhoona* (frankincense) greeted our breath, and far away beyond us over the heads of the worshipers, gleamed the half-lit inner shrine where the two large sapphire eyes of the God glowed above his robes of crimson brocade. It is said that these sapphires are the largest in the East. What a sense of art the priests had, I thought, to dress in crimson a God whose eyes were glowing blue stars. At this moment, a silver bell rang from afar; it sounded like large drops of water falling on a tranquil lotus pool. It stilled the worshipers into an inert mass. Both my brother and I had already sat down and had begun to meditate.

I found it hard to fix my mind upon the eagle of immortality in the midst of a beauty which I had not seen for thirteen years, so I opened my eyes and looked at my brother's face. It astonished me to see how quickly he had entered into silence. In the strangely lit atmosphere of the temple his noble forehead shone like the brown bark of a tree in springtime. There was not a line, or the shadow of a wrinkle there. Yet this man had been the head of the militant nationalists of India, living as a political rebel and a fugitive from justice for six years, at the end of which time, he had, for a motive not yet clear to me, abandoned his doctrine of revolution and

signed a truce with the English Government, with all the honors of war. It seemed to me that only to hear my brother's story would be a sufficient reward for my long journey, and I knew that he would reveal it to me in time, but that I must not hurry him. In the meanwhile, I learned his oval face by heart—it glowed with serenity, the long black lashes of his eyes quivered, his mouth, ever so austere, now relaxed its corners and smiled, as if to me, with an intimation of the joyous mystery that his soul was just then entering. The rest of his face, the pointed yet smoothly modeled chin, the aquiline nose, a direct inheritance from my father, and his ears large, delicately wrought like the Buddha's, I studied while he meditated. Every now and then I said to myself, "And this is the man who was alleged to be the head of the terrorist party, a subverter of law and order, a monstrous anarchist!"

Since thoughts are noisy in the presence of Silence, my brother's eyes suddenly opened and their black pupils cast a glance that scorched me; then they closed for a moment. I said to myself, "Don't think noisy thoughts; they wound his meditation!" But he opened his eyes again, now calm and sweet with a light that was human and fraternal. He rose to go out and signed to me to follow him. As we walked through the meditating

crowd I could feel the stillness beat against my unashamed preoccupation with the mere beauty of the spectacle. I never knew before that thoughts could be stentorian.

Once out my brother's large eyes, lotus-like indeed, rested on my face with a kindly expression in them: "Thou art too inquisitive about the trivial," he remarked. "Those who count the feathers on the wings of Silence are ungodly."

"If my thoughts disturb thy meditation, how canst thou meditate in a noisy city?" I asked.

He answered, "The noise of a city is like the chatter of lunatics in an asylum; no sane man heeds it; but the chatter of a sane man's thoughts is like clamoring kindness to one who needs more than kindness from his brother. Look, people are going to the theater. Let us follow."

"What kind of a theater is it?" I asked.

"It belongs to the Europeans and the Europeanized Indians. Let us take a taxi and go thither."

Yes, we came out of the Silence to drive in a taxi to the European theater, and what a theater! We found there a group of Hawaiians with yellow flowers, straw skirts, and ukeleles, dancing, droning, and playing, and this in the country where Shakuntala has been played without any interruption for two thousand years. The Europeanized Hindus, descendants of Kalidasa, were applauding

that droning and drumming of half-obscene imported dancing. I could not stand it and no more could my brother. We fled, and drove to Dhulia, to the theater of the mill hands. As we took our seats my brother remarked, "I see that modern progress offends thee. Now our mother's spirit will rest in the other world. I so feared that the Western civilization might have tainted thee!"

Before he had finished whispering these few words, the audience of workingmen hissed us for talking. But when I turned to the stage, I was shocked. The scene was atrociously Western. A horrible daub of green implied a sward, and a ghastly splash of white next to it symbolized a lake, and against that stood Savitri near her dead husband talking to the God of Death who was seated in a plush chair imported from England. But what they were saying was neither English nor Kanaka. One could feel the old diction of the archaic Mahabharata in the God's speech. Sanskrit is the language of the Gods. The woman was using Gujrati so pure that eighty per cent of the words were Sanskrit. Then as I watched, I saw that the gestures were not short and choppy; they were the old classical movements—gracious curves melting into sharp dramatic angularities, these in turn leading into newer and freer curves. Though this was a workingman's theater, yet it

was preserving the old art, while the cultured Europeanized folk were preserving the hula-hula.

The short play we were watching, an allegory, "Love Conquers Death," was about to end. The God of Death bowed his head before the chaste and devoted wife. He could not take her husband, for the fire of devotion that rose from her heart proved impregnable even for him—Kala—Death —Time the Black One. At this point an actor dressed like a priest came on the stage saying, "May all women strive to be like Savitri, and all men like her loyal and true Lord Satyavan!" Then came a classical dance, the Song of Songs, given by the younger members of the cast. Again the old gestures of hands and arms, the clear archaic angular movements of feet and bodies. To conclude the performance, the voice from behind the stage spoke three times with the deep somber intonation of an oracle: *"Rama, Rahim Ek Hai!—Allah Bhagaban Ek Hai!"* (Rama and Rahim are one; not two. The God of the Mohammedans is the same as that of the Hindus!)

Then rose a deafening shout as a dramatic answer from the audience: *"Gandhi Maharajki Jai!"* ("Victory to Kingly Gandhi!") Thus they took leave of the play of Savitri—"Love Conquers Death."

When we walked out into the balmy night, my

brother said, "Canst thou doubt where lieth the exact dwelling-place of Our Soul? Mother India is moving to a dimension higher than we see with our blind outer eyes. Gandhi is one of the many pilgrims from that interior tiger-guarded place."

"It is the common people who are her soul."

"Yes, they are Our Mother's own pang-born and pang-bearing ones. During my years of exile I traveled all through India. At every peasant's door I found God, and in every workingman the effort to articulate. Hindus and Mohammedans are but two babes sucking India's two breasts, and the babes know now that there are two breasts to drink life from. Each can draw the song and sap of life without injuring the other. Breasts of the one ancient Mother, two sons of the One Heart! India is safe. Gandhi is not a cure as the foreigners think; he is the sign of our convalescence."

"Tell me about Gandhi—thou knowest him well," I requested.

"Not to-night," he answered. "I will show thee Gandhi through other eyes first—then I will show thee my image of him! Come, the wings of sleep are upon my eyes; let us go to our lodging."

CHAPTER III

IN THE MARKET PLACE

THE next morning, we visited some of the mill hands who were on strike, which, like strikes the world over, raised more problems than it solved. However, this strike being the first one in India to come under my observation, I paid much attention to it. I did not ask the strike-leaders' opinion, nor that of their opponents, as to the exact nature of the trouble; on the contrary, I went to a barber who cut the strikers' hair. He was a curious man. His head looked like a cocoanut shell with a few holes here and there to give the beholder the impression of a face. He wore a Gandhi silk turban on his head—an ivory halo to the cocoanut—for Gandhi's hand-woven silk, though coarse in texture, is fine in color. Like all barbers, Nao talked profusely and that was why I went to him.

"Eleven hours a day," said he, "feeding those hot monsters of metal, sir, week in and week out; Sundays are no vacation—they are but days of recuperation; we cannot love the devil of the West."

"We?" I asked him.

"Yea, I too once worked at nursing those hell-begotten metal-mouths," he went on. "But I gave it up. Now I barber those who feed the beast. I earn less, but I get more time for singing and idleness. Was time meant to be counted by clock-strokes and screeches of factory whistles?" cried the inspired barber. "Did not the gods make time for men to fashion dreams? Mahadeo, Mahadeo! The men strike because they live like earthworms crawling between machines eleven hours a day. They strike because they need the cure of indolence for their rusty limbs. Is man a centipede that he should crawl on his belly fast as the lightning to feed monster mouths hither and yon? The wives toil too; between bearing children and giving suck to machines they grow scrawny as scarecrows and their voices sound like the very cry of filth. Women lose their bloom and men their gods—they visit no more temples; nor do they sing songs. God goes abegging for a votary in this our old God-enchanted land. Nay, sir, the factory is now the God of these men and women, and the whistle is his speech. They know not what they strike for; but I know. They strike because they are sick of feeding the hot mouths of metal when they should be feeding their own babes who have just grown teeth enough to bite

the father's finger for fun, or the nipple of the womb-carrier's breast, to show that though small they too can make jokes."

"But I was told it was Gandhi who made these men strike?" I said to the barber.

"Ho-ho! The evil spirit sat on the tip of that man's tongue who told you the tale out of malice."

"Nay!" I exclaimed.

"Gandhi has been in jail now six weeks. The strike started the day of his arrest.

"I mean the spirit of Gandhi," I explained.

"Spirit?" he questioned. "Gandhi can do no ill in spirit or in body. Strikes come because men are giving up their gods for the hell of factory work. Gandhi is no counselor to such men. If he were to walk by here you would say, 'An Avatar hath passed.'"

"Dost thou consider him holy, Nao?" I inquired.

"Did I not see his ugly face? Did I not hear his words? I beheld him as I see you. And I marveled at the monkey-like countenance without beauty. Then as the earth throbs when the fire-chariot pulls a long train, a quake broke in my heart, and I said to myself, 'That man is my soul's thousand faces in one face; that man unlocks his lips to give out words of precious truth: if he ask for my life I shall give it to him!'"

"Thou wouldst give thy life?" I stressed the question.

"Yea, that is the utmost I have. Had I more—" But here the barber's wife came out and offered us some cool drinks in brass cups.

After saying good-bye to them, my brother and I visited the homes of the strikers. They lived in an appalling squalor that beggars description. I was unable to bear it and I begged my brother to take me away. As we were going out of the most evil smelling of the lanes, a young Brahmin lady stopped us and asked us to give her money for the strikers' relief. She had a round face and beautiful black eyes. I questioned her and found that she was a woman of ancient family doing settlement work. She would not let us go without showing us the house where she ran a nursery for some fifty children whom she and her friends took care of during the hours their parents spent at work in the factory. Near by was another house where they held night schools to teach the laborers hygiene and eugenics. The entire place was maintained by subscriptions. She informed me also that she was a trained nurse and that as she was a widow without children and had no wish to marry again, she desired only to give her life to this service.

I said to her, "Why don't you meditate?"

She answered, "My meditation is work. I hope God will accept that, at least during this incarnation."

It was she who sent us on to the Seva Sadan in Poona, the home of the Women's University and other centers of advanced women's work.

Now Poona is a city of about 100,000 souls. It is the shrine of the Moderate Party, the Women's Advancement movement, as well as a place famous in history, and as it was not far, we decided to visit it from Bombay.

On our way to Poona, we met a silk vendor. He was a short, lean, hawk-faced Gujrati, who was selling Gandhi silk and linen. I asked him why he did not sell foreign goods.

"Brother," he explained, "I took a pledge before the Mahatma that I would sell nothing but purely domestic manufacture."

"Would you give a pledge of thy life to him?" I further asked.

"Why should I not? But he, Gandhi, will not take our life. He wants our soul."

"But why shouldst thou give him thy soul?" I pressed.

"Ah, had you only seen him! Those lips of his smiled at me. And I said to myself, 'That mouth speaks no idle word, it is like God's mouth.' And, brother, if God say to you do thus and so, would

you not do it, would you not give what is yours—your soul?"

About six hours later near Karle Cave Temple, one of the finest works of Ancient Indian art, I asked my Mohammedan Tonga driver about Gandhi. He flourished his whip and shouted, "Gandhi is bad."

"Why bad, O thou true believer?" I asked.

"He saith whenever a community is in trouble, it should cease work for a day or two and pray to Allah to purify itself. Why should I purify myself? If Rahim be a rogue and steal Mobarak's goat as well as his wife, why should you and I and the rest of the village pray to Allah? *We* have not sinned. Have we?" he asked me.

"Thou dost despise Gandhi, then?" I evaded the question with another.

"Nay, nay!" he exclaimed vehemently. "I saw him once. He is as one in whose eyes shines the peace of Allah. He speaketh as no Mollah can. He gladdens the heart and maketh the soul sweet with happiness at his words. Is it not good to perspire on a hot day? Is it not good then to hear him who hath Allah's blessings upon him? But I ask you, can one as low as I live as high as he? He saith that I should pray for Mobarak the thief and lecher. But how can I pray for that rogue when I forget to pray for myself? Nay,

Gandhi is too high." He shook his head with a strange expression of dismay and admiration. After a pause he lashed his horse, saying, "Thou brother of an ass, dost thou not wish Gandhi were thy driver to give thee a life all hay and no work! Thou son and begetter of mules, get up!" The beast understood enough to slacken his pace even more.

At last we reached our destination in the city. We were on our way to see a man named Govind who was a member of the Servant of India Society. This body is the real heart and soul of the Indian Moderate Party, although many Indians agree that the Moderate Party is made up of rich and powerful men and women who exploit the Servant of India for their own self-interests, making them abjectly pro-British. But there is not a soul in India who would ever dare allege that the Servant of India Society has any selfish motive back of its programme. Every member is like the founder, Gopel Krishña Gokhale, the idealist, who lives under a vow of poverty and devotion to India's political betterment, and Srinivasa Sastri, a poor man who never takes office in the Government, and lives for his country as unselfishly as Gandhi. However, Sastri is not Gandhi; he has no spiritual genius or faith in the political greatness of his race; and no doubt that

is why he is a Moderate, preferring India to remain under the tutelage of Britain until such time as she is able to rule herself. Govind, the man my brother had brought me to see, explained something of this point of view to me.

As we entered a spacious rose-colored house with violet-painted windows, we heard a soft low voice talking to someone far away. It was like the humming of bees among the thyme in the distance. I was enchanted by the sound and by the cool, cream-colored interior. Not a photograph, nor even the faintest drawing decorated the immaculate walls. A blue Persian rug of severe design in the center of the red-tiled floor was all the decoration in the room into which we were ushered by an old maid-servant of the house. We sat down on the rug, squatting in the ancient way, and with large russet napkins wiped the perspiration from our brows. The heat of the day was like warm hands pressing against temples and forehead. It was so hot that even our freshly laundered napkins clung to our hands as wool to the fingers of the knitter on a July day in New York, but somehow the Indian heat was more bearable than that of New York, for Indian life is ordered and Indian homes are built to withstand it.

Just as these thoughts were crossing my mind,

the violet doors to our left opened wide. We could glimpse a fountain in a large space surrounded by impeccable white walls. The small fountain sang on, now much nearer, with a song like bees about a honeycomb. It kept the house cool, just as a radiator in every room keeps a house warm in New York.

Now softly, as if keeping time to the music of the water, came our host through the open doorway and embraced my brother as men do in the East when they greet an intimate friend. Govind then touched his palms and bowed to me as I was presented to him by my companion. He said in Hindi, "I am a southerner. I know very little Hindi, so I must speak in English." Next to Hindi it is the common tongue of India.

As we were seating ourselves comfortably on the Persian rug I examined Govind's face more closely. He was dark as the blue sea after sundown. His eyes were large, but set too close to each other. He had a nose like an Ancient Egyptian, and the rest of his face was modeled like that of the Goddess Sekmet—strange, enigmatic, and fierce. But as he smiled at me, it became quite clear that the man's heart was tender as a child's. His upper lip was shaped like a bow, and the lower one was almost straight from one corner of the mouth to the other. When he stopped smiling, the enigmatic expression took possession

of his face again, he was no more a man, but an Egyptian God.

I spoke in English. "I thought almost all Indians knew Hindi; is it not our common tongue?"

"Yes, it is," Govind answered; "outside my sixty million southerners, nearly 220 millions speak Hindi. If you northerners could teach Hindi to us of the south, then all India would have a common language."

"He has come from America, Govind," my brother put forth, "to find out how you Moderate leaders feel toward Gandhi. Since, when we speak English we become direct, unpoetic, with shrill voice, let us plunge into the subject immediately and have done with it. I can't stand speaking English. It makes us nervous and turns our voices falsetto, which never happens when we speak any tongue native to India. Come, attack Gandhi in the best style of a Moderate!"

Govind smiled that enchanting smile of his. Then again he drew his lips together, sphinx-like. After clearing his throat, he began in a very unhappy voice in English. He even gave the title of his discourse: "Gandhi's Influence Outside the Prison Walls," which proved to be a short account of the Gandhi movement since the Amritsar massacre in 1919, already familiar to me.

"But look here," I asked him, "you are not

giving me your reactions as a Moderate of the most honest order. You are neither rich, nor powerful, yet you are a Moderate. Now tell me why you are a Moderate, and what you really think of Gandhi."

"I think," he said, "we are Moderates simply because in moderation lies wisdom."

"But most Moderates are so rich and so thoroughly fed on privileges that I should imagine your society, as an unselfish body, would shrink from them," I interposed.

"I am happy to hear your appreciation of our society, but couldn't you praise us without condemning somebody else? It is so easy to praise one thing at the cost of another!"

Thus beaten by Govind, I returned to my former question. "What do you think of Gandhi?" I repeated. "Is he opposed to your Moderate Party?"

"First of all, he is the most spiritual man living now," began Govind. "But I don't think his spirituality gives him the insight of a statesman. What's more, I do not hold that Gandhi is a great thinker. I must admit, however, that he has done for his country that which no one else has been able to do: he has made the masses fully conscious of their political birthright."

"Do you think that India is fit to be free?"

"No, not in the absolute sense. But," Govind continued, "I think we shall be ready for home rule in ten years if Gandhi's men consent to co-operate with us, the Moderates. Otherwise, if they continue to non-co-operate India will drift into unheard-of difficulties."

He went on to discuss the Montague-Chelmsford reform, saying that he was satisfied with it as a working basis, and a good start toward home rule; and from that, to explain what he considered the stumbling block of Non-Co-operation and the proofs of the failure of Gandhism to achieve its ends. He finished by saying:

"If Gandhi is released to-day, his followers will give up non-co-operation to-morrow. No doubt it is his incarceration that has united them so closely against the Government and against us who are co-operating with it. The non-co-operators identify us with the Government simply because we have accepted the Montague-Chelmsford Bill for the good of India. They don't see that we love our country as much as they do."

With these last words Govind's face grew dark with pity. And I said to myself, "This man is as unselfish as Gandhi."

The Moderate politician did not believe non-resistance could be suppressed by imprisonment, or even by hanging. Any large attempt at suppress-

ing it would drive it into military resistance. He cited the example of the Akali Sikhs whose religion began with non-resistance and ended as a big military empire; and as the story is a curious one and very typical of India, which has practiced non-resistance in many forms throughout many centuries, I will give it here.

The Akali Sikhs began a religious movement in the sixteenth century, whose purpose was to unite the Hindus with the warring Mohammedans by pointing out the resemblances that lay between Hinduism and Mohammedanism. The founder of this movement was a Hindu named Nanak, who saw the horrors of the war of intolerance that raged throughout India at that time. In order to put an end to the ravages of hatred, Nanak started to preach to both parties this truth of his: "There is only one God, the Creator, who is love: He has neither hate nor fear." Furthermore, in order to save his creed from formalism and ritualism, Nanak enjoined that people should seek God within their hearts, for "God prefereth no temple; He abideth in every heart."

Nanak, who died in 1536, was spared the horrible persecution to which his followers were subjected. "If people ill-use you, bear it meekly," Nanak had taught, and this became to his people a command which all obeyed. The succeeding

Gurus or leaders of the Akalis made more converts to the new religion, and that brought down upon the little sect all the wrath of the Moghul rulers of India. The Government ordered wholesale arrests and slaughter of these people, for they were, according to the court edict of that time, "preaching a religion distinctly apart from Islam." The Akalis were not only put to death, but they were tortured. For instance, one of their leaders was ordered by his Moghul captors to stop preaching on pain of having his tongue cut off. The man did not give in nor did he flinch when the penalty was exacted; on the contrary, he calmly opened his tunic and showed his torturers the writing on his chest: "I have given my tongue, but not my religion."

The steady persecution by the Moghuls so depleted the ranks of the Sikhs that for self-preservation they were forced to reconsider their practice of non-resistance. They were driven to take up arms *en masse*. This happened under the Guru or Leader, Govind Singh. About the year 1690 when they had fled to the northern hills for safety, Govind urged his followers to fight. Needing men who would give their lives as he commanded, it is related that he cried out: "Are there not even five amongst you who can give their lives for their religion? I want to sacrifice five men for

the faith!" . . . Then slowly five young men arose, each offering his life to the Guru. Govind said, "I will try you." So he took one after the other into his tent. Presently, a rill of blood flowed from beneath it which soon became five-fold. Govind issued forth, closing the entrance behind him. Now he cried out, "Is there another who dares give his life for the truth?" Then the whole crowd arose and volunteered to die. But Govind flung open the tent-entrance and showed his followers the interior. Behold, all those five young men were standing alive within, and on the floor lay five slaughtered goats. "Die no more as these goats," cried Govind. "Die like men, fighting!"

From that day on the Sikhs grew to be a military power. And they became so powerful that in another half century they swept the Moghuls away from almost all of northern India.

When we left the house of the Servant of India, the afternoon sun was far behind the walls and there was no need to fear his shafts of light. Therefore, we walked along the red roads between groves of mangoes, till we were outside of the city.

My brother exclaimed, "How dreary it all sounds when a man talks an alien language. Govind could not use a single figure of speech. When

we speak English, even elephants could not drag a jeweled metaphor out of us. I want to sing to relieve the pain in my heart—

" 'Every time I ask a question, God,
Thou dost smile with stars.
People call Thee loving—
How can that be true
If thou dost only smile
While questions spear my heart?' "

He sang his song twice. Then as if the question was answered, he pointed to a small house ahead of us and said, "Let us go to that peasant's home. I know him—he speaks Hindi; he will make talk that will satisfy our thirsty fancy."

Under the light of the setting sun the peasant's newly thatched house had a glow of gold. Even the walls of brown throbbed with the singing grandeur of the sunset that was now deepening into purple in the western sky against which the palm fronds were spread in peacock fans of gold and emerald flames. As we drew near the prosperous-looking hut, the peasant family of four came to welcome us. After greetings and explanations were over, the owner of the house sat down beside us and talked. The pauses were punctuated by the cooing of a dove in the neighboring mango grove. I asked, "Can India soon be free?"

The peasant answered, "How can a man be free when his soul is not free? To have a free country we must have free souls."

"What is thy opinion of Gandhi?"

The peasant answered to the rhythm of the swaying cocoa palms, "The dust of illusion still darkens men's eyes, but a day will come when all the people of the world will see that the Mahatma is their Lover. He speaks like a holy one, for he is holy, and when he smiles he has brought us God?"

"Wilt thou give thy life if Gandhi command?"

"Yes, that I will. But he will not command it. Only he whom the Antaryamin—God within—prompts, shall give his life. For God is the life-giver. He alone can ask us to yield life."

"Hast thou seen Gandhi? Hast thou heard him?" I questioned further.

He answered, "Do you remember the old saying, 'The fragrance of a flower goes but with the wind, but the fragrance of holiness goes even against the wind?' Why should I need to see Gandhi? His holiness reaches me, despite my nature. Come, sir, perform the evening meditation in my house. It will gladden my wife and my children. Behold the sun has set."

"The evening comes on wings of silence! Tone down thy voice of mutiny; listen to the Silence for

Whose worship the stars are lighted." With those words we sat down and meditated, till the whole world slipped through the wicket of sunset into the larger spaces of night. Then the mistress of the house raised the earthen lamp before her on a level with her eyes and went about the rooms propitiating the spirit of the night. It was sweet to watch her. The half-veiled face floated in the darkness above the lamp and I can see it before me now as she carried the light outside and bore it three times around the sacred plants, symbols of life. When she went indoors again, she set the lamp down on the floor, her body bending almost in two and rising quickly as a willow branch bends down and rises the instant the pressing hand lets go its hold. It was all grace and simplicity!

After this, we said farewell to the peasant family and walked on into the fragrant starlit space. We wandered for some time, and then decided to go to a temple near by, in order to spend the night in the priest's house. Though the evening worship was over, there was a large throng of people seated in the outer court, where from a wooden platform a man was reading from the Mahabharata. He, no doubt, had it all in his memory, since he looked very rarely at the book before him; if he did, I am sure he saw very little, for the small earthen lamp that was burning

beside him was almost completely curtained with hovering moths. I felt a pang of beauty as I heard him roll out the majestic Sanskrit lines. He would stop now and then and explain at great length in the common dialect what the Sanskrit meant. After listening to it for a few stanzas I realized that he was explaining Savitri's story, the same that we had seen acted in Bombay, Love conquering Death. All the women and men were exhorted to be like Savitri and Satyavan. At the end of his reading, the priest said the following prayer before the people dispersed:

"He holds the universe in His grasp,
Yet He is handless;
He is present everywhere,
Yet he has no feet;
He is sightless, yet sees all!
Though earless, all the heart-beats of men
are audible to Him,
Smaller than the smallest,
Taller than the tallest—
Even the Himalayas are but a dwarf's leap
beside Him—
Yet That, which hath humbled all,
Is humble enough to dwell in your Hearts."

Next day we spent with that priest, talking of Gandhi, for whom he had been put in jail. This is the story he told us:

"One day I beheld Mahatma Gandhi. It was

like seeing honey harden into a rod, he was so sweet yet so flinty. So I said to myself, 'Thou hast praised God in a walled space and prayed for guidance; now behold God has sent a face for thy guidance; wilt thou go with him into the open, or wilt thou stay here in security burning more incense?' To that question, mine own heart answered, 'Go thou, follow the face of him who is God's witness.' Therefore, I went and told my tale to the Mahatma himself and he said to me that I should grow and live truth—Satyagraha—as a tree bears fruit. So like a tree I stayed rooted where I belonged. I preached Gandhism from my temple door. One day I spoke to the people as I preached to them last night, not of God, but of Satyagraha. I said: 'The British race are not the enemies of India, but their Government is. It behooves us to destroy that Government at once.' Hardly had I finished my speech when two protectors of peace without their constable's uniform, leaped upon me. Neither I nor my hearers could resist, since we had promised non-resistance to the Holy One, and so I was taken to the English prison. It was the month before the Prince of Wales came to our town.

"When we reached the prison yard, I found the place guarded by many of my own people in the service of the Government. The moment they

saw me they all shouted, *'Mahatma Gandhiki Jai'* ('Victory to Mahatma Gandhi'). I was so startled by such a cry from men in the uniform of authority that I could not believe my ears. But when they shouted the same thing again and again, I knew to what extent Mahatma Gandhi was loved, even by those working for the Government; but their feeling did not help my trouble for one of these very men locked me up in a cell full of low-born drunkards. In there, disgusted, standing in a pool of disgorged dinner, I shouted *'Mahatma Gandhiki Jai!'* And lo, hundreds of other voices shouted, as if echoing my cry: *'Mahatma Gandhiki Jai.'* And still other voices from the distant parts of the prison took up those echoes and the booming shook the prison walls as the flood shakes the walls of a mountain cave.

"Suddenly, I felt a hand pulling mine. It was a follower of the Mahatma trying to speak to me in spite of that terrible din. He drew me toward a corner of the cell, and as the noise died down he said to me, 'The whole prison is full of our people under arrest. Do not shout for they think thou art being tortured by those in power and they shout back to give thee courage.'

"The corner he had led me to was clean and dry; and we started to make ourselves at home there. Hardly had we settled down when a dozen

of the followers were marched into our filthy cell amid deafening cries of 'Victory to Gandhi!' My heart jumped in my breast when I saw their home-spun Gandhi caps and the dark red bands they wore across from shoulder to chest. They were men from the University who were forbidden to bear these signs. When they recognized us in the half-dark, they began to tell us that thousands had been arrested, and that many had been sent away owing to lack of space to keep them in the prisons. So these were requested to offer themselves for arrest the next day, and this they did, in large numbers, according to their word. Some prisoners were obliged to wait until factories and private buildings were made into jails for their safe-keeping.

"Hardly had the young men finished telling their tale, when the cell door was flung open and an English Sergeant stood in the doorway. He said, 'Any non-co-operator can get his immediate release if he will sign this note of apology.' We made no answer. Again the Sergeant gave the same message, and only a drunkard replied. The Sergeant said, 'Silence! *Sowarkobatch*—(you son of a pig)—I am speaking to the Gandhimen!' I answered, 'Gandhimen do not apologize,' and the Son of Anger answered back, 'You shall pay for this at the trial to-morrow.'

"Then we were locked in our cesspool again for a day and a night.

"The morning after, we were again asked to apologize. One consented, to our shame, and he was released; the rest were sentenced by the Court to various terms of imprisonment.

"Because I am no vender of news, or a prostitute, I shall not tell you how bad was that jail. We were treated like the vilest criminals.

"But this was our enlightenment," the priest concluded, "for it taught us how bad prisons have been heretofore, and how many brother souls have been murdered for centuries because we were ignorant of their torture. We could protest only by refraining from food for a long period—some indeed abstained for sixty-five days. The common criminals took interest in our method and in a few days they too went on the hunger strike. No doubt this overcoming of prison discipline, as they called it, frightened the rulers, for, at last, having failed to conquer us, they set about to alter our state. Now, even cutthroats and robbers are transformed into non-co-operators of high courage because Gandhi has come into their prisons. The light of God penetrates where even the sun cannot shine."

I asked him if he still believed that Gandhi was helping him and he answered, "Can my soul ever

be weaned from the Mahatmaji? As the unseen God guides the stars, so his meditation guides us through its invisible way, inscrutable to the eye, but not to the soul. Unfathomable is the power of sacrifice!"

After talking with that priest, I decided that I need see no more people, for my purpose. I was in haste to go in search of the Holy man, to find whom had been the first incentive of my return to India; then too, as may be imagined, I yearned to see my family once more, and my childhood's home, after all these years of separation. But according to our Hindu tradition, it was not fitting for me to do so until I had purified my soul at the feet of Holiness. So I told my brother that I was ready to begin our journey and he decided that we should start that evening for Benares.

We set out on our pilgrimage in a third-class compartment of the Bombay Mail. It was like being in Heaven again. And not an unexciting Heaven, either! In our compartment were men and women from all walks of life. There were English-trained clerks who slaved in offices for $10 a month; there was a sharp Marwari (money-lender) whose very eyes shone like two one-dollar pieces; and there were, of course, the majority—peasants and artisans going on pilgrimage to Nasik, Prayag, Benares, and Himadri.

They were all talking about crops, malaria, wages, and weddings. Not a word of English anywhere! It was India as she has been throughout the ages.

Until now I had been uncomfortable in my own country, because the changes that had taken place during my exile in America had been enormous. Fifteen years ago there were no automobiles in India outside very large cities; no house was afflicted with a telephone, nor were villages stricken with the eruption of second-hand Ford trucks. Now there were no elephants where one used to see them so often. Their old sumptuous, stately rhythm had been chopped up into the hiss, sputter, and clatter of motors. Men even in small towns were beginning to wear the ugly Western pantaloons and coats, abandoning the large flowing garments that showed their beautiful rich-tinted skin. That the white man should wish to cover his body with layers of rags seems natural to our tropical eyes, because his skin to us looks sick and faded and should be hidden from sight. But why the eternally dressed nakedness of the brown skin need be deprived of sunlight and fresh air, and encased instead in trousers and coats, passes my understanding.

So when we boarded our train to go on our pilgrimage, I felt happy that here at last was India. Men and women were dressed as little as

they liked, and spoke the old picturesque idiom, saying more with one metaphor than educated Moderates in pages of colorless English.

Hardly had the train stopped at the next station when a man began to sing sixteenth-century songs in the most cultivated and simple manner.

> "I wander, and look for thee;
> But thou dost evade my eyes
> By hiding thyself in my heart."

The train started again and as it rattled on more and more noisily, I asked my brother who the songster was. "He is a Kaowal," he replied, "one of the descendants of the families of singers that the Moghul emperors endowed and cared for from the fifteenth century on."

I asked him how he knew.

"Have I been a fugitive from British justice these many years all in vain?" he replied. "There is not a district in northern India that I do not know, and not a family whose nature I cannot understand."

My amazing brother! I gazed at his serene face, trying to find in it some trace of his adventurous life, but I saw only the marks of peace. He was saying, "This man is a Kaowal. Look at his face, straight nose, fine spacious brows like mountain crests, and eyes clear and kind—every feature

indicates a fastidious spirit. What is still more interesting is that he cannot and will not sing any song made since the sixteenth century and the downfall of the great Moghuls. I have seen Kaowal families who would rather starve than learn and teach the music of a later age. Thou canst scarcely imagine how deeply these singers love their art, but remember this: the Moghuls not only built the Sikri and the Taj, they endowed numerous families in order to keep the classical music of India alive and now, though the Moghuls are dead, our music still lives."

Here the train stopped again. And the Kaowal sang—

"Why didst Thou not make me a lover, my Master,
Since now thou wouldst have me love Thee?
It is Thy doing that preventeth me.
If Thy desire was for roses why didst Thou give me the form of thorns?
Thou wouldst enter me like a royal lover,
Yet thou comest by the back door grim as a Thief!"

As that old chaste melody sung with extreme fidelity came to its end, the whole car shouted, *"Sabas tariph"*—overflowing excellence. Then we tried to give the singer money, but he would not take it, saying:

"Though I am your servant, I sing not to give

pleasure, but to while away boredom on this Western monster of hurry. Let me sing a few more words ere the beast rages again and runs on its cruel path of metal:

"I hated idolatry, but when I saw an idolator
prostrate before his god
I knew that he was better than I who undo
all by hating his worship."

Thus he would have sung every time the train stopped, but something happened that put an end to music for a while.

At the next station a Mohammedan gentleman from the north boarded the train with his wife. The lady was unveiled, which surprised me somewhat. I said to my brother, "Do even Mohammedan women go thus nowadays?"

He answered, "Gandhi says that we must give equality to our sisters. Those Mohammedans who love him try to follow him as we Hindus do." There being no room save on the bench occupied by the Marwari (money-changer), the Mohammedan gentleman and his wife sat down on the end of it, edging as far as possible from the Marwari, and before long everyone in our car was moving away from him, too, as though he were a leper. When I remembered that the Marwaris are a class of Hindu tradesmen notorious for their

thrift, avarice, and success in business—dealing mostly in goods imported from England—and that during the inception of non-co-operation they promised Gandhi not to bring foreign goods into India and broke this solemn pledge in a few months, I began to understand. By now the train was going fast, but the restless movement of the passengers continued. The entire car became a welter of colors. The women's long flowing robes of purple, gold and green and blue, the turbans and caps of the men, gleaming in green and ochre, bobbed up and down as they shifted their seats. The whole car looked like a rainbow broken into bits and thrown helter-skelter.

Suddenly, the Mohammedan broke out—

"Why don't you Hindus live up to your Gandhi?" Everybody looked at the speaker. He was dressed in Gandhi homespun with a Gandhi cap on his head. He spoke with great passion. "I am a Mohammedan, yet I live up to your Gandhi, while you who are of his religion do not."

Everybody answered, "We do. We do."

"If you do, how do you happen to let this Marwari travel with you? Isn't he a traitor?" he asked.

An elderly Hindu gentleman answered, "Dost thou not see, O beloved friend, that we have given him wide berth?"

"That is not enough," answered the irate Mohammedan. "We must make him get off at the next station. He is a traitor. He sits there innocent like a donkey, but I am certain, in the name of Allah the terrible, that his purse is full of hundred-rupee notes made out of the sale of imported British goods. He is strangling our country with the noose of his avarice."

"Bravo! Well spoken—*Mahatma Gandhiki Jai!*"

The entire car kept on shouting, *"Mahatma Gandhiki Jai"* (Victory to Gandhi) until we reached the next station, a matter of forty minutes. Here the Marwari left our compartment. His parting shot rang out: "If ye want to boycott the foreigner and his goods, why do ye not boycott this foreign fire-chariot?"

"Daku! Daku!" ("Cutthroat! Cutthroat!") At a loss for a reply, the car resorted to invective.

That incident marred the beauty of our journey. For the rest of the night the Kaowal remained silent, and the other passengers sought repose as best they could. Railway travel, like everything else, had changed in India. Later, when I went from Calcutta to Bombay, I saw, for the first time in my life, women and men traveling together members of Brahmin and other important castes. We were nearly a hundred passangers in a third-

class carriage, and the women's faces were totally unveiled, yet everyone in the car save myself took this display of women's freedom as a matter of course. Were it in southern India where the Hindus are the majority of the population one could believe it, for in those parts the Mohammedan idea of seclusion of women has never penetrated; but to see women free and unveiled in public in the Mohammedan-ridden north was an astonishing experience. However, as one of my fellow-pasengers expressed it, "Since Gandhi's coming into prominence miracles happen daily in India."

It took us three days to reach Benares. During that time I plied my brother with questions, most of which he refused to answer, saying:

"Do I question thee? Do I inquire why thou hast returned to India, or which appears to thee more absurd, India or America? We Hindus do not trouble ourselves about such matters because we know that in due season the soul will disclose its secret as the tree puts forth blossoms with the coming of spring."

CHAPTER IV

THE SOUL OF INDIA—I

BENARES again! The bend of the Ganges that first came to view glittered and flashed like a scimitar held under the sun. It was three o'clock in the afternoon when we entered the holy city. From the distant bridge over which we walked, the turrets and towers of the thronging temples rose to the sky that burned like a turquoise shell. Stone upon stone, yellow, gray, and brown, houses upon houses, rose tier upon tier—some had blue doors and windows, and some red; but each and all breathed only one spirit; it was the city of holiness raised above the world on the trident of Shiva. Even the monkeys in the temple of the Mother seemed holy to me. Benares cannot be described; it is held aloft on the trident of holiness —no description can come near it. I can set down only a few impressions as background to my experiences there. I expected to be disappointed,

for I had come to it after a long sojourn in an utterly alien world, and instead of disappointment, I felt its overwhelming majesty. It was Brahminism incarnate, for no matter what new sect rises among us, in Benares it will find a temple and worshipers. In fact, the long arm of the Eternal Religion that abides here reaches out and sustains any new religious experience that utters itself in any form of worship. Thousands of years, thousands of religious teachers—Buddha, Shankara, Ramanuja, Nanak, Kabir, and Vivekananda —all have found their place here. It is the vast banyan tree which gives shelter to any spirit who wishes to come to it. Here every arch is a soul-story and every roof the footstool of God. There is no other city in the world, unless it be Rome, that can point to and suggest an image of what Benares means to us.

Color on color beat upon us like a changing sea. The tawny minarets of the Beni Madhav rose clear against the intense red of the large gaunt temple towers next to it; the latter in turn stood against the pure white domes of lesser houses of worship, and over them all danced the gleaming turquoise sky on fire with the sun. Men and animals jostled one another as we walked the ancient flagstones, while beside us paced the multitude of pilgrims clad in robes of the color of ochre, yel-

low, white, and red. The large Shiva Bulls, with their humps throbbing with heat and fat, rubbed their sleepy gray sides against us.

That July afternoon was not a day, but a revelation. No sooner had we entered the city than we felt that the veil of delusions was torn asunder, giving us a glimpse of the road that we were destined to travel in order to reach the Holy One. It seemed quite natural that everyone we met should point out the way to us. In Benares the streets have no names, and houses are not numbered, yet everyone whom we asked for direction told us which turn of the road to follow. One white-bearded old man said, "Go to the Spice Market and turn north; that will bring you to the Jewelers; there, if you do not find anyone to tell you which way to turn, go east; that will bring you to the Flower-Weavers' (garland-makers') quarters; turn east again—But Shiva Vishnu, what is the use of so much information—one step at a time, say the senile and the wise! Therefore go, brothers, first to the Spice Market and if you lose your way, it will only fulfill some prophecy or other! What is life but a fulfilling or defeating of prophecies? Without doubt you will find your Holy One, Shiva, Shiva!"

As we took leave of the old man, my brother said, "There is no race on earth that can talk as

we do. Every one of us is born with the peacock's colors in his imagination."

We hastened to the Spice Market, then to the crossroads of the Ten Stallions, there we turned northward to the embankments called Gem of Gems. Here we made an ascent of a hill covered with houses five hundred years old, buttressed and held together like small Gothic churches hugging one another. We went through courtyards of old palaces flagged as early as the days when men first learned to make flags. We passed people's drawing-rooms, laundries, flower gardens, over yellow sandstone fences, down broken pavements, in and out of gullies wrought with stones as old as the world itself.

Then suddenly we came upon a vast garden enclosed by tall red brick walls. There was a gate made of blue-black iron bars; on it two letters were carved in Sanskrit; we pushed through this gate into a garden green with the fierce verdure of the tropics after heavy rain. We did not wait for permission. We pressed our way past a person or two—men or women—until it seemed, after passing endless bungalows and corridors, that we were held at bay by a sound—the sound of a marvelous lion-like intonation of Sanskrit. Both of us felt its power. It was not Sanskrit, it was a ring of fire woven out of a chant! One who wished to cross that ring must know the secret of

Immortality. No doubt it was the tiger-voice of the Holy One intoning—"He has no fear of growth, senility, and death, for he has put on the flame-garb of Immortality. Now with mortal hands he gathers the fire of deathlessness. He is stiller than the mountains, hence swifter than the swiftest flight of man's mind; subtler than the subtlest, as a tiger in the blackness of the forest. He is the Eagle of Eternity flying through the wilderness of Time. He has unlocked the door of Soul-ecstasy for the Spirit of men to enter in. Though desireless, he fulfills all desires! O thou fierce silence, quicken my senses, smite my tongue till it drips with the flaming honey of Truth-Utterance, and this my mortal body becomes Thy Chalice of Immortality! *Hari—Om—Hari Om —Hari-i-i O-O-m-m!*" But it was not these words, but the golden thunder-vibrant voice touching chords of infinite range and shades of sound that held us motionless where we stood as he chanted till the sun went down.

I know not how long we waited in the vestibule, but at last when we entered the presence we found the Holy One seated on a wooden couch and a small brass lamp burning near him. The room was absolutely bare. The red sandstone walls looked gaunt and hard, the cemented gray floor felt cool under our travel-hot feet.

We fell on our faces before Maharaj, the Lion,

the name they gave the Blessed One. It was such a joy and relief to lie there on one's face! Every moment I felt that gladness was passing into my heart with a pang. I know not how long we lay thus, prostrate before him.

Suddenly, we heard him say, "Rest a long time here."

Now I looked at him. Yes, he was indeed holy. The power poured from him, infusing all the air of the room with life. It is impossible to describe it. Those dark brown eyes shone upon us with the simple radiance of a child's, yet they were full of maturity; slanting a bit when he looked at you sideways, their pupils and the whites were almost wrinkled with age, but his gaze was fresh as a child's after a night of restful sleep. He had a straight tall forehead and straight brows. His face was lean and strong, there was not an atom of superfluous flesh, nowhere a single line to indicate care or worry. When I looked at his mouth, I knew at once that he was old, for his lips were drawn and sunken; though the youth of his beautiful nose, firmly modeled chin and clear eyes, mitigated the age that had touched him there. I learned later on that the Holy One was suffering from a carbuncle on his left shoulder—it was the pain of it that one saw in his lips. He spoke:

"What brings you here?"

I answered, "Problems, my Lord."

"Problems?" he asked, then laughed. "Thou has acquired the Western habit of worrying and running the Universe. But whose Universe is it, thine or Brahma's? If it is His why not look for Him and find out what He wants from it?"

"But this hate between the East and the West, my Lord. Throughout the East I have heard nothing but distrust of the West. From Egypt to Burmah all men say that the Westerners are thieves, all that they want is oil wells and money. I am afraid this attitude will cause much trouble between Asia and Europe."

"Thou art very tender-hearted, my child. But do not rob the heart of the discrimination that is its own. Thou art in need of rest. Sit here and idle away time. Eat sweetmeats and sing songs. The Universe can wait till thou art well!"

That evening we spent quietly in the bungalow allotted to us by the Holy One.

Next morning about five o'clock we were roused by one of the disciples of the Blessed Master. He wished to know if we would care to bathe in the Ganges. We assented, and we were hardly outside our rooms when we heard the thud of human feet. Beat, beat, beat, sounded the bare feet of the oncoming pilgrims. If I were to describe India by a single sound, it would be that beat of

the feet of Man. Someone is always walking barefoot and marking the rhythm of pilgrimage; the dust of illusion darkens our eyes and the veils of time and space delude our minds, yet the heart and feet of every Indian know the rhythm that unites his soul with God.

A very short walk brought us to the river bank. The brief morning twilight had already vanished, and the warm white light of day shimmered on the waters of the Ganges. Every time a woman or a man clad in crimson or saffron dipped in the water, the colors broke into a thousand running bits of liquid splendor. Here and there against the half-leaning and half-falling sculptured walls of a temple, girls in violet chudders, their yellow skirts dripping, moved like statues in stately procession in an antique world, or like frescos, suddenly come to life.

At last I found myself swimming down the glad currents of the sacred river. The tall stiff embankments of the Gwallior Ghaut slipped by me; half-submerged temples, shrines of an older cult, raised their red turrets as if to greet me, as stroke by stroke I went where the dead were being cremated and their ashes thrown into the Ganges. Now and then I swam past a calm figure of a Yogi sitting on a fallen temple tower lost in meditation. Little boats with their painted sides crossed and

recrossed my way, yet I swam on to the burning Ghaut. Death, death alone, I wanted to see. The many colored draperies of the bathing populace, the umbrellas made of cocoa palms, the chanting priests, all the moving life against the hard yellow walls of the embankment, delayed me not. I wanted to behold Death. At last I reached the burning Ghaut. There I stopped.

I saw two bodies on their respective pyres just catching fire, while the ashes of a third were being thrown into the river. Ah! wonder of wonders. "Thousands are dying the death that no one can avoid, yet the rest of us live as though we should never die!" Those burning pyres sputtered and sang as if life to them was a festival.

Suddenly, I saw the Holy One. I could not believe my own eyes. Near, yes, right near one of the pyres he stood, with three of his disciples, all dressed in ochre-colored robes. I at once climbed out of the water and went toward them to salute the Maharaj. He said, "One of our patients died during the night. We had to cremate him. The weather is so hot that any delay in burning a corpse may cause putrefaction."

"But, Master, why do you have this institution? Why have a hospital right in the midst of a sanctuary of meditation?"

"It is a long story," he answered. Then turn-

ing to the three of his companions, he remarked, "I think now that the fire is well started you will not need me, so I will go and bathe. Will you all go home after you have finished your work?" "Then he turned toward me. "Come, let us bathe and have a swim."

In a few moments he and I were swimming in the Ganges. He swam wonderfully. Suddenly, I remembered the carbuncle growing on his back and urged him not to swim any more. Like a naughty lad he answered, "I do not think of carbuncles when I am at play. Come, race me against the current!"

It was hard work for me. I admit he went against the moderate current faster than I. Again we passed the Yogi lost in meditation on the turret of a fallen temple, and the glittering purple, orange, russet, and green draperies of the bathers clinging to their bodies like liquid colors as they came out of the water and up the stately steps of the Ghaut, while above them gleamed the red, brown, white, and tawny temples in the fierce light of the sun. Lo, he had sprung like a lion of white flames over the city and flung himself on a black cloud—that "elephant of the sky" as the poet said.

At last we reached a place where we saw my brother standing on the edge of the water, with eyes shut, chanting to the sun—

"Golden hands,
Golden wings,
With thy fiery radiance
Scorch and consume all ills and evil,
And bring that day
That will press my heart against the heart
of God."

The Holy Man looked at me, his dark brown eyes twinkling with mischief. He said, "I suppose thou canst no more sit still and meditate on God than a tiger can concentrate on vegetarianism!"

"I am not pious like my brother," I replied meekly.

"Ha, thou callest him pious, he who has beheld God?" the Holy One ejaculated.

"Has he truly seen God, my Lord?"

"Canst thou not smell the fragrance of his soul? If thy spirit's nostrils cannot inhale it, can words give thee the perfume of yon man's vision?"

"Then he has seen God?" I inquired and affirmed in the same breath.

"Ask him. He will tell thee," said the Holy One very simply.

We left my brother to meditate on the river bank, and went on toward the Holy Man's abbey. Again I noticed how beautiful some of the figures looked clad in their wet raiments. The rhythm of their barefooted walk and the close-clinging wet

colors made the women seem creatures from some ancient myth. Here and there a porter, bare to the waist, would pass with a heavy weight on his head. To see so much of a body, such pleasing skin, such play of muscles was a strange contrast to New York, where everyone is dressed to the hilt. Here in India the bronze men carrying loads on their heads looked stately—in fact, no king is so majestic as men or women carrying loads in this way. The dignity of it is unsurpassable. No matter how cultivated a society grows its toilers will always appear more in harmony with art than its idlers. "The carrier of a load is greater than the wearer of a crown," Benares told me.

The Holy One who had been walking silently beside me suddenly remarked: "If the *Without* is so beautiful, how much more beautiful the *Within* must be!"

"But, Master, can't I tarry a bit at the door of the without?"

He answered, "Thou dost not tarry; thou dost hasten rather to catch the glamour of the apparent. Moreover, the pursuer of the thunder cannot afford to run. He must sit above the thunder cloud in the center of Heaven forever. He need not move any more, for all things are happening before him. The center of the *Within* is the seat of vantage from which to see the drama—the

players, on the stage as well as off, and the audience too. Take that seat and none other. Come *Within,* my son!"

We were at the gate of the abbey. We entered and again passed the many buildings on the grounds. I noticed about a dozen sick people being carried into one. In the next building we saw patients lying in bed close to the wide open windows.

"Why a hospital, and a day clinic as well?" I asked. "How did you come to have them here?"

"My son, it is the punishment for doing good. Go, change thy dress and come back to my chamber. I will explain it to thee."

When I entered his room again the odor of sandal wood greeted my breath. The walls looked cool and hard and the floor on which I stood felt cooler yet. This was the first time I had walked barefoot in thirteen years; my feet were sore. I had almost lost my entire faith in the rhythm and beauty of barefoot walking. But I felt the same sense of a strange power pervading the room.

On the floor were seated two young ladies, an old gentleman, their father, and a young monk in yellow, crouching before the Maharaj as though bowed by his sanctity.

The Holy One bade me be seated. "I am

glad," he said, "that thy feet pain thee. That will start the easing of the pain in thy soul." . . . He turned to the others, "What was I talking about? —I remember—the hospital which is a punishment for doing good."

"How could that be, my Lord?" questioned the old gentleman.

"Even thou, an old man, dost ask me that question also? Well—it all began one day about eleven years ago. I, who was meditating with a brother-disciple under a big tree, decided to stop meditating, and care for a man who had fallen sick by the roadside. He was a lean money-lender from Marwar and he had come to Benares to make a rich gift to some temple in order to have his way to Heaven paved in solid gold. Poor fellow, he did not know that all the flowery good deeds done to catch the eye of God will in the end become the bitter fruits of desire.

"I ministered to him until he recovered and could return to Marwar, to lend more money, I suppose. But the rascal did me an evil turn. He spread the news all along his way that if people fell sick near my big tree I took care of them. So very soon two more people came and fell sick at the prearranged place. What else could my brother-disciple and I do but care for them. Hardly had we cured them when we were pelted

with more sick folk. It was a blinding shower. I saw in it all a terrible snare: beyond a doubt, I felt, if I went on tending the sick, by and by I would lose sight of God.

"Pity can be a ghastly entanglement to those who do not discriminate, and there I stood, with a wall of sick men between me and God. I said to myself, 'Like Hanuman, the monkey, leap over them and fling thyself upon the Infinite.' But somehow I could not leap, and I felt lame. Just at that juncture a lay disciple of mine came to see me; he recognized my predicament and, good soul that he was, he at once got hold of a doctor and an architect, and set to work to build the hospital. Very strange though it seems, other illusions co-operated with that good man to help him—the money-changer, the first fellow I cured, sent an additional load of gold and built the day clinic. In six years the place was a solid home of delusion where men put their soul-evolution back by doing good. Shiva, Shiva!"

"But, Master, I notice that your own disciples, boys and young girls, work there?" I put in my question.

"Yes, like these two young ladies here, other young people come to me to serve God. Well, youth suffers from a delusion that it can do good. But I have remedied that somewhat; I let them

take care of the sick as long as their outlook on God remains vivid and untarnished, but the moment any of my disciples show signs of being caught in the routine of good works—like the scavenger's cart that follows the routine of removing dirt every morning—I send that person off to our retreat in the Himalayas, there to meditate and purify his soul. When he regains his God-outlook to the fullest, if he wishes, I let him return to the hospital. Beware, beware: good can choke up a soul as much as evil."

"But if someone does not do it, how will good be done?" questioned the old gentleman in a voice full of perplexity.

"Live so," replied the Master in a voice suddenly stern, "live so that by the sanctity of thy life all good will be performed involuntarily. Did no one ever tell you that current story of the Air-Eater?" He included us all in his glance. "I shall tell you of him, because I knew him and what I relate is not what the story-tellers have to say. They called this teacher of mine the Air-Eater because he used to become God-conscious so easily and used to stay in that state so long that sometimes it would be many days before he would descend to eating, drinking, and the other business of the earth, and since he ate so little, they called him the Air-Eater. At first he taught by word of mouth. Toward the latter part of his life he

retired into a mountain cavern above the hills at Naini. All about him were villages within a descent of five hundred feet, almost as straight as the stem of an ankus. The villagers who were not dulled by the vulgar odor of civilization inhaled the perfume of his presence; like bees to the lotus they went up the rocky height to behold their Jewel of Sanctity. They camped there two days and two nights amid tigers and black panthers, but except for blessing them for a few moments one day, the Air-Eater would not come out or show himself to the devoted multitude. Well, men must sow and reap, children must be suckled; so they all went down the hill without procuring any visible signs of goodness from their Sadhu. But just the same, they were grateful to him; for they sent him fruits and cakes once in a while.

"The young bloods of the village grumbled at the waste of good things on a holy man who did nothing for their benefit. However, the old men said, 'A holy man must be given offerings whether he breathes for anybody's benefit or not. Is not sanctity itself the jewel of existence?' That silenced the rationalist young grumblers.

"After twenty years, one day when they brought fruits and cakes to the cavern mouth, they found the Air-Eater lying dead. Nobody mourned him, since nobody missed anything by his going.

"It was about six weeks after the cremation of

the dead body of the Air-Eater that a horrible crime, a murder, occurred in the village. The whole community was shaken with disgust and fear. So the next day the Elders, as you know, the four elders of four castes, and the old priest, all started to fast and pray in order to purify the community. They kept it up two days. It was about the last hour of the second day, when one of the Elders shouted, *'Mila, mila!'* (The hidden is revealed!) The others asked, 'What have you found?'

"He answered, 'The clue to the murder.'

"Of course, the whole village was called to the communal threshing floor, and the old man held forth: 'It was when my beard had sprouted to its full size that the Air-Eater first came to that mountain cave. And he lived near us till now, and my beard is the color of sand. He died two moons ago. But all the time he lived yonder, we sent him our fruits and cakes. Never did he raise a finger to help us; he gave no barren woman a boon, nor did he cure the sick. Yet did our harvest grow any leaner? Did the thunder god fail to empty his cloud-buckets each season? Did crops suffer? Were the kine stricken with pestilence? Nay—I hear you say Nay! All went well. Virtue begat virtue; life begat better life. No man took his brother's life as long as the holy one

lived. Now hardly has he died, when we have murder in our midst. Is not the clue plain? Is it not written in our own hearts? Does not the soul shout it so that our ears ache with it? Yea, fools and murderers that we be, we were pure of folly and murder as long as he lived. Now that he is dead there is no one here to ward off evil. He never did us good, but his lion-presence kept the wolf of calamity from our doors!' "

Here the Holy One paused and looked at us. Seeming to realize fully that we were hanging on his every word, he resumed:

"My children, do not try to do good. Live like the holy man, my whilom teacher, the Air-Eater: live so that evil will never dare come near where you live, and all the good will be accomplished of itself. For, as a scavenger removes dirt and constantly watches out lest the dirt infect him with disease, so the doer of good lives in perpetual fear lest his soul be contaminated with the evil he carts away from the house of life. He does not know into what danger the routine of good work can plunge his God-seeking soul. The pestilence of improving others may kill his spirit. Try the safer way—live so that by your living all good deeds will be done unconsciously."

At this moment my brother entered the room, dressed in fine ivory colored silk. He had a look

in his eyes that was not of this world. But my mind was after another thing. I asked the Blessed One, "What did the Air-Eater teach you, my Lord?"

"O thou soul of vulgar probing, dost thou not know what I learnt from him I can utter only through my living? If the fragrance of my living does not call the soul to suck the honey of eternal bliss, then—but I will tell thee one thing more," he conceded; "I will tell thee of the last visit I made to him, sometime after he had entered his mountain cavern. I reached the spot in April. All the hills were dry, every scrap of the earth was parched, almost cracked with the dry heat. When I reached the cave-mouth at midday, I was fainting with thirst. I saw him come out, a man old, ah, old as this city of Benares. His hair was like threads of white silk, his eyes were sunken like large lamps in a misty cave. He gave me a drink of water out of a black shell. I drank on and on—it seemed that I could never have enough —I had no desire to look at anything. Finally, when I had drained the last long drop I raised my eyes to see my master, but lo, I beheld only for a moment his back at the cavern-mouth. Then he was gone!

"I knew what he meant—I had lost him! I said to myself, 'The thirst of thy body took prece-

dence of thy soul's thirstiness.' But there was no time to rebuke myself—somehow I must attain that man! So I sat down to meditate. I meditated five hours. Yet no answer from the Air-Eater. Darkness was shutting down upon me. The young bears were linking their voices together in the upper woods and shook the echoes in all directions. The stars came out and questioned me. Again I plunged myself into meditation and not before the first faint preening of the wings of dawn did I emerge therefrom. Then I felt a cool something resting on my hand. I looked carefully; it was the chin of a fawn, dripping with dew. I looked beyond—a pair of small ruby eyes glowed near by. As if they caught my glance and took the hint, they disappeared. The fawn breathed more easily, and raised its chin; I gently stroked its nose and forehead with my hand. Turning my gaze from the deep brotherhood that danced in its eyes, I looked at the stars; they were close and quivered questioningly like the beckoning finger of a man—it is a terror-rousing sight; do not let the stars question you!

"Suddenly, they stopped those heart-breaking signs and fled. The small Himalayan sparrow set the theme of dawn with two notes. After a pause of several moments he repeated them half a dozen times, then stopped. Like a long call of a flute

rose a silver light in the east. Again the bird answered. Again came the flutings of silver light in the east. The fawn now standing near me almost whistled a cry. That was the signal—now began the cymbal crash of gold over all heaven; color upon color, bird note upon bird note, forest upon forest tore the vestments of night into ribands and shreds of silver, gold, purple, and green. Then like the groaning of drums the bellow of the bison came. It startled me. I looked around and the fawn sensing fear from my movement fled, while, like the cool cry from a happy heart, came the chant of the holy man from his cave—

" 'I am the founder of all life,
I am the many-branched emerald tree of Heaven;
I am the sanctities, higher than the highest hills.
The jewel of immortality,
The secret in the sun;
And the song of gold in the dross of life.' "

"The sky was by now two wings of glowing sapphire on which flew the sun, the Eagle of Gold. . . .

"I spent nearly three weeks waiting for the holy Air-Eater to come out of his cave. I never saw him. At last one day in deep meditation the secret flashed through my mind."

Here the Holy One paused. A great light shone in his eyes. The whole room was filled with glory; the man before us was no more a man, but a song—not by some other voice—but aching in our own throats. Yes, that was the secret; perfect identity of each one of us with all. Alas, hardly had that glorious light broken out when again it vanished.

"Then," he continued slowly, all his radiance gone from his eyes, "then I said to myself, 'He will not teach me with words; from now on my instructions must come through Silence'; and I rose to leave, for I had accomplished my purpose. After I started down the hill I could not help looking back over my shoulder. Behold, he was standing there at the cave-mouth, smiling a tender, inscrutable smile. I said to myself over and over again, 'Yes, I know, my instructions will come to me through silence now.'

"I never saw the Air-Eater again. The next time I went to his cave, I stopped at the village first and they told me what I suspected; the Air-Eater had passed onward."

At this moment the arrival of the doctor interrupted the Holy One's discourse. That he had a carbuncle we all knew, but none had been told that the Master was to be operated on that day. The young ladies and their father left the room and I

noticed that they bowed very low before the Presence, and with the ends of their napkins took the dust from his feet. Is there any sight more noble than men and women bending reverently before what they cherish as the highest? In this gesture man attains the acme of his art.

Before the three had left the room two more monks entered with large fans embossed with red and blue semi-precious stones. With these they began to fan the Master.

The doctor, who looked exactly like a bronze Sophocles, began to arrange his weapons on a large sheet of leather which he had spread on the floor. This Sophocles was somber as well as brown and had very little sense of humor; he laid out his goods with all the unction of a priest poking among his sacred vessels and bells. I whispered to my brother that there must be the manuscripts of tragedy in this man's pocket. He whispered back, "It is likely he has enough bills there to visit tragedies on many a patient. He is our most prominent surgeon; sometimes they nickname him 'the butcher.' "

I looked at the Holy One; he had in the meanwhile closed his eyes like one withdrawing himself into the deeps of his own thought.

The doctor turned to him. "I must give you an anæsthetic," he said.

The Master opened his eyes and added gently, "I don't think that is necessary. One of the disciples will assist you while to the others I shall talk philosophy; that will be my anæsthetic."

"But you will suffer pain. You may bungle my work," retorted Sophocles.

"Oh, no, doctor; I will not spoil the skill of your instruments of torture. Do begin!"

So they began. Sophocles deftly cut into the carbuncle while the Master described in a quiet even voice the need of Bhakti, Raja, Jnana, and Karma Yoga to us. He went on and on with his ideas as the doctor worked with his scalpel. Yet the Blessed One's tone did not change, nor was there a mark of pain visible anywhere in his face. Once in a while I felt the running and trickling of blood down his back as he paused between sentences, but even that feeling in me was brushed aside by the words coming from his lips.

At last it was over. The wound was completely bandaged. Now the doctor turned to the Master and asked with a smile, "Did you feel any pain?"

"Why should I, doctor?"

"I felt the temperature not quite normal on that side of your back. Are you sure you felt no pain?"

"How could I? I was absent from that part of the Universe where you were working. I was present in this part where I discussed philosophy."

Suddenly, the doctor glanced at us and remarked, "When this man dies, one of the most astonishing specimens of Hindu religious culture will go with him."

He bent low, and, as the others before him, took the dust from the feet of the Master, then stood up to go. He enjoined his patient to take absolute and perfect rest, then helped the disciple to put the place in order.

I was unable to contain myself any longer. I said to the Blessed One, "You who are so holy, why do you not heal yourself?"

Here the doctor interposed, but the Holy One said, "I am able to answer the child."

"Very well," said Sophocles. "I shall wait till you finish answering. Then I will put you to bed."

"Doctors and Death are absolute," exclaimed the Holy One. "The reason, my son, why I do not heal myself is that the will here," he pointed at his heart, "turned into ashes long ago. I gave my will to the Will of the Universe. Now I spend my time willing the happiness of all. If in the happiness of all I incidentally am to be healed, then my friend the doctor is the incident. If not, why should I call my will back from the embrace of the Infinite to do here a little repairing upon myself? No, my son, I would rather not be Holy

than stoop to take back a gift to my Beloved!" He turned to the doctor. "Come, dear friend, you have been very patient with me; put me to bed!" At this, everyone save the doctor and the two monks with fans left the room.

CHAPTER V

THE SOUL OF INDIA—II

OUR stay in Benares was very short. But that little time the Holy One made compact with loveliness, peace, and wisdom by giving himself whole-heartedly to us. We did not see him for some days following the operation, and that time we spent in visiting different shrines and other religious teachers. One shrine that we visited was Saranath, where Buddha taught for many months, five and twenty centuries ago. Though the archeologists have dug open and labeled the old Stupa remains, yet there was enough of the Lord's presence in the Deer Park to quicken one's pulse with wonder and awe. There is a tall full-length statue of Buddha as a young teacher that was an astonishing combination of femininity and manliness. Since he is God-man and man-God, he must convey that sense of perfection which epitomizes

the highest qualities both in woman and in man—perfections wrought out of one stone into one image. I might warn the Christian beholder of the statue to remember that Christ, in medieval art, is usually represented as man; there is nothing feminine about him, for in the image of his Mother all of feminine perfection was embodied —or so it seems to our alien view. On the contrary, in India, Maya, the Mother of Our Lord, was kept out of the sacred iconography, so the twofold perfection of humanity had to be rendered in one image. In the Buddha of Saranath, the sculptor showed great skill in depicting a young man at an age when his beauty is not altogether alien to a woman's. So any Christian who looks at the image should tell himself that he is seeing the Mother and the Son, two in one, and, if he does so, his pilgrimage to the Deer Park will be repaid by an exquisite experience.

Later, while my brother went inside, I sat on the steps of a temple watching the people come and go. The faces of the pilgrims who filled the streets almost stunned me. They were not faces but desolate immensities with eyes that had lost all trace of earthly interest and burnt with the terrible longing for another world. This was India and India's very secret—unbearable, lonely, sinister—yet how full of serenity in the absence

of all but the ultimate desire! Presently, I began asking each one who passed within my reach, "Is the soul immortal?" to which came the invariable answer:

"It is. As the snake shuffles off an old skin to to put on a new one, so doth the soul shuffle off a body, but it dies not with the death of its body."

I noticed among the pilgrims a peasant woman, about forty years old, who was from Kathiwar. She was very dark brown, a color intensified by the spotless snow-white sari she wore, a small and delicate creature with sensitive features. She had been seated on the steps above me, and now she rose to her feet and stood with her back against the temple wall like an exquisite bas-relief. As though fortified by this support, she demanded what right I had to come and question.

Before I could answer, a tall fat beggar edged his way toward me: "O father, father of kings; the daughters from thy loins will be queens if thou wilt but give a starved man a penny," he begged.

"I have no daughters, and only one son," I said, "and I shan't gain much by feeding fat fellows like thee!" Then hoping I was rid of him, I turned to the woman still leaning against the wall. "I come here as a Brahmin, a knower of holy love."

"How dost thou know it?" said she. "I hear thou hast lived in the West?"

In India news travels rapidly and that a strange woman should know about my life was not surprising.

The beggar put in another plea: "Thou shalt walk in sandals of gold; thy son shall unking kings."

The peasant woman interested me and I tried again to silence him. "What dost thou know, fool?" He was taken aback by that question, and I had a chance to say to her, "I have traveled everywhere, but found naught sweeter than my religion, and no woman nobler than those of Hindustan."

She laughed, suspecting a compliment, while the beggar teased, "Oh, thou father and mother, protector of religion, give me a penny."

But the Kathiwari woman, as though to test my knowledge of holy love, asked me to recite the Gita. I assented, but after ten minutes stopped short, and she supplied the rest from her own memory. Again I began—and stopped. Again she helped me out and thus we finished the first two chapters of the Gita. Our Sanskrit had silenced the pestiferous beggar, but now that I paused he began again: "Didst thou ask what I know?" and patting his libidinous stomach, the

impudent fellow cried, "I know all things—ask. What troubles thy pate?"

"Well then," said I, thinking I had the best of him at last, "how does the Finite grow to be Infinite?"

And the rascal, after a slight well-calculated hesitancy, replied, "By that same magic which turns a drop of water white when it is poured into a bucket of milk."

Since there was no hope of peace and I felt that his answer really deserved recognition, I gave him a double copper coin. But as if no interruption of any kind had occurred, the woman went on, "Thy Western sojourn hath hurt thy accent."

"No!" I exclaimed in consternation. "Try me again, I beg."

She pronounced some excellent lines from the Svetaswataro and I chanted them after her as well as I could, but she exclaimed, "Thy accent is not rugged. The Western people have robbed thee of thy gold; they have put clay at the tip of thy tongue. It is soft."

Desperately, I plunged into reciting the praise of night. "Night is a black stallion caparisoned with stars," etc. After I had finished, I looked anxiously at the white-vestured figure still standing against the temple wall. For a while she would not condescend to speak, then at last, completely ignoring my accent, she said abruptly:

"My son, thou hast a wonderful garland of words, but God is a raging bull. Hast thou the lassoo of love to trap Him with?"

Above the crowds of worshipers the sky began to grow red. The many colored towers rose tier upon tier until the last and highest minarets plunged their white points into the sunset. The fragrance of frankincense and flowers announced the evening worship at the shrines.

When my brother joined me, we turned away from the temple and wedging our way between the pilgrims and the sacred bulls, we dashed down an alley that led to the river and away from the crowds. Here and there from the houses would come the sound of weird chants lifted to God; a child rushed out from a doorway screaming for some friend beyond sight or sound, and then we came upon a man with his right arm upraised, stiffened, and petrified. It stuck out like a stump from his shoulder. He was a gaunt, shaggy fellow, his face and head covered with black hair streaked with white. He sat on the bank of the river, motionless in the twilight, and staring at the water without ever shutting his eyes. I hesitated to speak to him. His presence made me feel ill at ease, but at last, I summoned my courage and said, "Hast thou given thy hand to God?"

"What foolishness dost thou utter?" His voice was acrid.

"Thy arm, friend, why does it stick up like a pole?" I persisted.

"It gave me terrible pains the first year I held it so," he replied. "The muscles and the sinews are not obedient at once; they pain one before they obey; but after a year of terrible suffering the arm stiffened, the muscles froze, the nerves died, and since then this refractory limb has behaved as it was ordered to—the very emblem of uselessness."

"What drove thee to such self-torture?" I went on.

"Self-torture? Dost thou give false name to true things? It was self-liberation. This arm had to become petrified—"

"But why?" I spoke confidently since in all India religious secrets are public property.

"An act of evil of dire consequence came to this world owing to that foolish hand. It struck the one I loved most. So I punished it. Religion says that a limb that sins shall cease to exist."

"Master!" I exclaimed, "thou art a good Christian—the Christian God teaches, 'If thy hand offend thee, cut it off."

"But I am Hindu, my son," he replied stolidly. "Take thy babbling away from the presence of my meditation." With these words he fixed his steady gaze across the waters on the blue spaces beyond

and forgot me as if I had sunk like a stone into the fast-darkening Ganges.

Beside many shrines we saw a few holy men, that is to say, men each of whom was holy in his own manner. In a hovel across the city, we visited a stark-naked man, fat as a Shiva bull, who denied God so vehemently that compared with his talk, Ingersoll's and Huxley's words read like sermons. He had eyes like a parrot's, red with indignation and a nose like a parrot's too. He said: "God does not exist; men die, that is the end of them. Those who are ascetics are buffoons, and those who indulge themselves are worms of the dung-hill. Life is what we see, and what we do not see is the box of tricks that supply the holy-bolies with the art to fool mankind." And turning suddenly on us he roared: "Begone from my presence! How can I have any use for you since I have no use for God?"

Yet there were many men and women who said that this fat fellow helped them to live their life better. There was no doubt in their minds that he was a holy man.

The next holy one we met was a woman, I guessed about seventy years old, though it was hard to be sure; she seemed that old when one saw her at work. She lived in a little house of her own, which she cleaned with her own hands every

morning, and no one was allowed to help her. She was a Sunyabadin (All-is-nothingist), preaching All-is-nothing-ism in her own dwelling and seldom leaving it. She was a sweet old lady, apparently a Kashmiri, for her skin was light and she had hazel eyes, large and round. Her dried thin lips looked like a crack across the ivory of her face. She was straight as an arrow and the doming of her tall shaven head made her look extraordinarily tall.

The walls of her brick house were pure as a Mohammedan cemetery just whitewashed. After we had sat down before her, on a cemented floor bare even of a mat, she said, "Why do you come here?"

"Are we not welcome?" I asked.

She smiled gently and replied, "I have no God to offer you."

"But are you not a Hindu?" I questioned anew.

"A Hindu I am," she answered. "That is why I can be what I am. I could not be a Moslem and say God does not exist, but I can be a Hindu and say as Kapila, 'If God exists—where is the proof?' In our scripture it is said, 'He who says he knows, knows not God. He who says he knows not, may know Him.' One who denies is as good as one who affirms."

"Then, Mother, Hinduism is both theism and atheism?"

She answered, "It is both and more. Kapila, who was a God-denier, is as holy to a Hindu as Shankara, who affirmed Him. Buddha is an incarnation of God, for he affirmed what he denied. Hinduism is not a bludgeon, but an assemblage of singers with instruments—each has his own melody and tune to offer, correcting as well as enriching the other. I remember after my father died, my brother and I (who loved one another) had a quarrel. We were deeply humiliated by our own behavior, so we sent for our Guru who came to see us the next day. He said that if, in the family of Music, Brother Drum must be tuned to the quality of Sister Flute, we should understand why the same thing has to be done in a family of human beings. So, my children, the seekers of the real are but instruments in the music of Reality—Hinduism recognizes that fact. It respects me, a God-denier, as it respects another who affirms."

I plied her with questions, but she pleaded to be excused, for her disciples needed her ministrations that day, and we were obliged to leave her. Her last words ring in my ears to-day as clearly as they did then: "Holiness can live with or without God. It is greater than God, for even He must be holy."

I asked her from the other side of her threshold, "Mother, if holiness exists, do souls exist

after death, do they live and communicate with us?"

"Who told thee the dead speak?" she asked sharply, "and if they do, what do they say, child?"

"There is a Western scientist whose dead son speaks to him, as one man speaketh to another," I answered.

With a weary smile she retorted: "I see—the dead communicate as we do: even they must flatter and feed our vanity."

With these words she closed the door.

The next man we called upon was a lean and surly holy one. He lived in a very small hut far out of the city and anyone wishing to see him must go on foot, for there was no good road to his dwelling, nor did he welcome those who drove to his house. He hated luxury in any form. His hut consisted of four adobe walls and a thatched roof, though inside it was painted white and shone with terra-cotta arabesque designs of exquisite delicacy. The teacher always sat on a little straw mat while his visitors crouched on the mud floor around him.

He was a middle-aged man, with a receding forehead, over which rose his steely mane in fierce animal grandeur. He looked like an old toothless tiger when he spoke, with a few teeth left in the front of his mouth. His eyes were gray and

set so close to each other that it seemed as though only his small pug nose kept them from merging into one.

When we came into the room and elaborately bowed to him, he growled with satisfaction. "So thou art the illusion-stricken one from America?" he said to me.

"Yes, my Lord, I have sojourned in that romantic land of democracy and negro-lynching." I quoted a Hindu journalist.

"Beef-eaters all!" he growled again.

"What is wrong with us as a race, my Lord?" I asked in sincere humility.

After stroking his beard for a while, he said, "We are gifted with ability to realize God in but one way, the divine way—we must renounce ourselves in order to find Him, our true Self."

"What then is the Westerner's way?" interjected my brother.

"Why such haste with questions? Am I a holy man, or am I a cow that thy questions should fall like sticks on my back? We Hindus have given up our own path of renunciation and have lost ourselves on the path called the enjoyment of power. The Western people follow that path, which is the demoniac way to God."

"Do you mean to say that both of those paths lead to Him?" I questioned.

"Why this beggar's hurry—am I a king giving alms so rapidly that thou art afraid to lose thy share?" he scolded me; then resumed, "Oh, a curse on kings, beggars, courtesans! The demoniac path is man's conquest of matter. By conquering matter he acquires power: by using that power for further conquest, he pursues God relentlessly and becomes His very Self. In India, King Asoka conquered an empire by force, then conquered himself by his own soul, and so found the Ultimate Power of Serenity. The West is traveling this path now—it is on the road of lesser power. Will it succumb at the threshold of God as did Akbar the Moghul? Who can say?"

The old man shook his gray mane and raising his voice into a kind of chant went on, "But we children of India must abandon Bhoga-Marga (the path of power) and turn back our steps, turn back three hundred years, thence directing anew the soul-elephant on the path of renunciation. Our race reaches God through Tyaga Marga (self-sacrifice), and loses Him through Bhoga (power). Renounce, renounce!" he exhorted us.

"I am much concerned," said I, "with the problem of good deeds."

"Ho, ho-ho!" He roared with laughter. What a Rabelais of religion the old man was. With a devilish look in his gray eyes, he said:

"Only the pure in heart can do good. One must be pure like fire or it is impossible."

"But we can help our fellow man in trouble," I expostulated. The question still tormented me. I had been living with it so long.

"O thou America-sodden spirit—to help is to help oneself! Whenever thou helpest a man out of his pig-stye of trouble thou art helping thine own moral muscles to grow. So why sayest thou that it is to another thou givest aid?"

"But suppose"—I tried a new approach—"one could be pure enough to do good?"

"The pure do good by nature," he roared. "The cocoa-palm grows cocoanuts not to give the cool drink of its milk to a thirsty traveler on a hot day; it grows cocoanuts because it cannot help the fruiting of its own being. The pure bear good fruits."

"But if, instead of good, I do evil and commit follies?" I asked.

"The folly of a mad soul," he answered solemnly, "may help the world more than the good deeds of the deluded and the impure."

"But if, in spite of all, I do good, what will come of it?" I insisted.

"Judging by the color of thy character," the old tiger exclaimed, "thy good deeds will be stored up here on earth, and thou wilt be born again to

reap and enjoy the result of them. That will be calamitous," he went on maliciously. "Take my advice and do not play the dangerous game of improving thy brother—thou art not pure enough!"

With these words he suddenly rose from his seat saying, "Do not make me talk any more, I pray you. Every time a man talks he loses Prana (energy)." He took the ends of our chudders in his hands, and rubbed them between his fingers, then held each end up to our respective noses. My chudder exhaled the fragrance of jasmine, but my brother's had a perfume unknown to me. We took the dust from his feet. As we were going out through his narrow doorway, his parting shot rang out: "Every being must exhale the perfume that is in him. The flower doth not make the bouquet, that is the business of the gardener; all that the flower can do is to keep its nature pure and its fragrance fresh."

After we had gone half way toward the city, a thunderstorm broke. The cloud trumpeted like a mad elephant; its lightning tusks flashed and curved from horizon to horizon; cranes flew to greet it and the trees swayed with the wind like a green helmeted army clamorous in the fray. The temples and palace towers reared their challenging brows against the cloud, and the drums beaten by

the worshipers sought to drown the thunder. Even flowers and leaves torn from trees and vines tumbled and trembled on the road as did the scarlet blossoms in the streets of Ancient Ujjaini where Kalidasa, the poet, observed them twenty centuries ago.

Right before us, hardly four feet away, a mango tree as thick as two legs of an elephant put together swayed and lurched. My brother cried out and pushed me back; lo, with a sighing sound the tree rose slowly from the ground, all its roots straining to the utmost. For a while it seemed to stay in midair, then a gust of wind like a thousand sharp edged axes snapped the roots, the tree was heaved like a pile of dirt and flung with a crash into the road. Its trunk throbbed and its branches trembled as an animal mortally wounded.

The wind blew harder and harder; the very road seemed to be rocking under our feet. We skirted the fallen tree and fled for shelter into the city, running at the highest pitch of our breath, as they say in India, until blinded and beaten by dust and wind, we reached the monastery.

As we entered the grounds, we beheld the peacocks dancing on the boughs of the mango. They had come from the Rajah's garden next door, spreading their jeweled fans to-day as they did before the time of Kalidasa. Every time the light-

ning flashed those dancers on the mango boughs shrieked with delight, and when the bolt crashed they danced to and fro as if quickened by a passion that was a secret between them and Heaven.

Our Holy One was sitting on the red-tiled veranda of his dwelling. He seemed very tall in the twilight of the storm, and the doming of his high shaven head loomed pale as marble. He beckoned us to gaze at the tempest with him.

"Shiva is coming," he said, "garlanded with the blue above, riding the black bull of cloud and blowing his lightning horn. The Nataraj, the god of the arts, is passing, and the dance of the storm is the sign of Shiva's coming. What a myth!"

As he spake we saw two kites fly very low over the roof of a neighboring house; then suddenly they were dashed by the storm against the ground before us with such fury that their wings were instantly broken.

They rolled over and over for the length of the entire yard, a matter of fifty feet; then the wind left them, trying to beat their broken wings against the garden wall.

It was a horrible sight. As if in expiation, the storm clouds overhead suddenly burst and the rain fell—not in drops, but in one thick writhing sheet of water blotting everything out of sight. The fury of the rain muted the thunder roar into a

plaintive distant cry; even the flashes of lightning could be seen hardly at all through the inky curtain of dazzling rain that plowed up the ground before us. The Holy One began to chant and his voice held fathoms of assurance in its clear depths:

"Thou art the One Truth to whom men have
given many names;
Thou art the sanctity that is in Woman,
And the manliness that is in man;
Thou art the young woman and the little
brother that stands beside her,
Thou art the aged one leaning on a staff,
Thou art the new born, thousand-faced in
every child,
The dragon-fly's blue loveliness flashing
through space,
The startled light in the ruby eyes of the
dove;
Thou art the dancer footing the seasons,
And the large-wombed cloud
(Heavy with the pregnancy of its lightning-
child)
That drags its dark side laboriously
Over the tumult of the blue-black sea;
All these forms
Reiterate that thou art the Ultimate Silence
Over which gathers the dust of sound."

It rained all day and all night and before midnight all life seemed to have been enveloped for

a thousand years in dull drumming showers. Moisture pressed closer and closer upon our senses until every pore in our bodies ached with the soft damp relentless insistence of the rain. The sinister monotone of water and wind pierced the hearing and seized the brain and beat upon every nerve center again and again and again until the human consciousness danced with pain. The Holy One ordered us to meditate on God in his company. I do not know how long we meditated with him on the floor of his bare room, but when at last he spoke, it was the middle of the night. A light was burning in a brass lamp on his right, while we sat facing him. His voice was resilient, low, and extremely soothing, and my spirit was as quiet as a little child's in the arms of its nurse.

"We as a race," he was saying, "have been driven to meditation by our climate."

I heard myself asking if that were not a rather deterministic point of view, to which he dissented in the same quiet tone. "It would be determinism," he said, "were it true of all races that live in the same climate. But Africans, who, I believe, have a temperature similar to ours, do not meditate. Holy men seated in snowy caves in the Himalayas meditate on God. A hard arctic climate will drive an animal to hibernate in its hole as it drives a man to shelter, but the animal sleeps

in the cold cave where the holy man warms his soul by piling upon it the flames of immortal truth. Therefore, my son, say not that climate makes soul: souls use climate. As a man aimeth and thinketh, so shall be his realization."

"Master," I said, "so it is with us in India; but how of the seekers after Truth in other lands? They are sincere, their aims and thoughts high, and yet it seems to me they often fail. There was a man in America of whom you may have heard—Woodrow Wilson. He had an ideal of great good which he sought to embody under fourteen heads. He went forth to put into practice those fourteen principles, but high as was his aim, noble his thought, they were not realized. How do you explain this, my Lord?"

"I am an ignorant man; how can I explain such high matters, my child? I can explain the Beloved, for he loves those who know nothing. But this man of fourteen points—is he a holy man? Did he meditate at least a year on each point? Did he fast and pray to God long enough to put immortal life into each one?"

"No, my Lord. He did not fast and pray fourteen years," I answered.

His face lit up as the face of a child when it catches sight of a fascinating toy. His large eyes glowed with amazing innocence. "How can one

engraft any idea on life without first sacrificing for it many years and many volunteers?" he exclaimed. "Life begets life. If a man lives a truth with all the devotion of a strong elephant, that truth will live as long as a mountain. There is no escape from paying the price of our desire. Even the Creator pays for what he wants.

"I will tell thee of my own experience," he went on. "All my life I did good. I was a far better man than a lecher, a fellow-disciple of mine who had been a drunkard and consorted with the flowers of delight since his adolescence. One day this man came to my Master, and in his drunken state, not knowing what he did, kicked the holy one. . . . The Master said after a few moments, 'It were better for thee to rest thy feet here a time. Thou didst kick so hard that thy feet will be too weary to carry thee home.' The drunkard broke down and cried. To end the tale, he became the Master's devoted disciple and attained self-illumination sooner than I, for my good deeds held me down to the cause and effect of them.

"One day the Godlike one said to me, 'Good deeds purify thy life, but they give thee no Insight. Now therefore that thou art purified with the lamp full of oil and the wick ready, strike the flint of meditation and light thy flame!'

"So I plunged into it. Years passed like min-

utes, till at the end of fifteen years the light came accidentally, as it came to that drunkard and lecher, my brother-disciple. . . . Is it I? Is it mine? Nay, nay. It is God—the supreme accident." His voice changed and grew stern. "A man must renounce riches, power, fame, and even the consciousness of his own power—the greatest and the final renunciation of all.

"Then we must renounce ourselves for our truth?"

"No, that is like a factory," he replied sharply. "To renounce desire at this end of thy soul-factory, and receive the finished product of bliss at the other—how ludicrous! The Infinite is not a factory—foolish one, He is a wrestling match! In a wrestling match the victory is uncertain: a wrestler will tell thee that his victory was an accident. Why? Was he not stronger than his opponent? Was he not more skilled? Yes, he was all of these. Yet his victory remains inexplicable to him."

As though a paroxysm of pain had seized me, I cried aloud: "Blessed one, give me my answer. This rain without is like the cruel ever-recurring pounding of a hammer upon my soul. It is not rain, it is one question reiterated without end."

"What is the question, thou child of God?" he asked gently.

All my pent-up anxiety burst from me again. "From Egypt to China, from Constantinople to Ceylon, my Lord, everywhere I hear only that the East suspects the West of thievery and murder and India herself believes that all the West wants not her soul but her gold. When I look into the future, I can see on the horizon only a long war between Asia and Europe. It is true that Europe has exploited Asia and that Asia has ground for her distrust, but I who have lived in the West know that the West too has a soul that I love. Can we not avert the next war and bring the souls of the two humanities together?"

My questions seemed destined to provoke mirth, for, like my Rabelaisian friend of the day before, the Blessed One laughed heartily, but with this difference: his enjoyment of it was like sunshine. For a few moments every fiber of him shook with such mirth that it was a delight to see. Oh, to be able to laugh like that! And as if this blast of laughter was from Heaven, it made us forget the rain outside. My brain and nerves were relieved from the pounding sensation that had been going on for hours and the pores of my body, until then clogged with the warm glue of throbbing moisture, now began to breathe in the early morning air.

"East and West," he answered, "those are two archways through which the sun passes on his large

orbit of wandering—but is there East and West to Him Who watches that fiery form dance from space to space?" He paused as though trying to simplify a difficulty for a backward pupil and then continued with a new metaphor. "What is man that his quarrels about the ant-hill, this Earth, should reach the lofty precipices of Heaven? Arrogance and ignorance are the wings on which men fly, only to fall later irrevocably by the terrible weight of their leadlike spirits. Let East and West quarrel if that is their way. But to us who 'Have taken down His golden mask of the sun and Seen His Face and stared into His Eyes'—to us this quarrel of ants is no more than the chatter of the stars to Him. And thou," his voice changed again, "child of God, why dost thou bow thy head before the home-makings and home-wreckings of these ants? To thee, every twig of a tree is as thine own finger, and every leaf as the hair on thine own body; each animal is a part of thy limb, and each bird a reflection of the winged thoughts in thy brain. Thy feet are below the abyss, for thy soul is above the highest imagination of men. How darest thou stoop to notice this beggar-talk of the disinherited souls? To thee even the sun marks no frontier, and the spaces dare not ask for thy citizenship. Art thou not the myriad faces of life merged and intensified in One? What dost thou

fear? Doth the Absolute fear? Can Immortality die? Canst thou be stilled by the lesser fury of men's words?"

He paused a moment. His face seemed to grow into another face. His eyes burnt with a serenity that almost scorched us.

"When I sit and meditate, gradually as I pass onward, I raise my hand to the Ultimate Truth. Then I behold other hands coming from other parts of the world to rest upon the same shining Oneness. They, my brothers, are touching the same Truth as I. How can there be a conflict between them and me? Are we not God? I urge thee, my son: go back to the West and bring me my brothers. They are weeping in the dark who toil to build the road of God. Go, find those men. Tell them to help me—ask them to unite all peoples and all worlds. When thou hast found them thou wilt talk like men together, not like ants in terms of little rival hills, East and West. They will tell thee that there is neither East nor West, but only the spirit-seekers and the matter-mongers. The war is between these two. Dost thou not understand that the armies of the Soul can win only by Inward fire?"

"But tell me, Master, how to light my own soul?" I cried.

"Bring out the Face of Compassion from

within thy heart! Bathe the wounded body of man in the cleansing currents of thine inward peace!"

Apparently, he noticed the joy that was not unmixed with bewilderment surging within me; for he paused a moment and looked at me with the tenderest smile, then concluded: "The world is suffering from judgment. Men talk philosophy to their brother writhing and bleeding on the ground, a spear planted in his heart. What the poor wounded man needs, they, the instructors of mankind, do not see; it is not the salt of judgment on his wound, but the strong hands of affection. East and West are words that stab with criticism—drop thy words, like daggers by the roadside, and rush to thy Brother's rescue. Canst thou not see the agony in his face? Compassion, compassion—" Suddenly, his voice changed, his language too changed into Sanskrit, and he chanted quietly,

"O thou indescribable self of Love
Come forth from within,
Thou causeless, endless tide,
Rush forth like stallions
To pour healing Peace upon the world!
Wipe away the bloodstain of hate—
Erase the scars of fear from Our Heart!"

The day had already broken, and the rain had

abated long ago. A strong wind was still blowing when we came out of the room—the world looked young—nay, newborn to our eyes. Benares in this dustless morning light was indeed the city of holiness; it was above the world—held aloft on the trident of Shiva, and over it hung the intensely blue sky, the body of Vishnu. I gazed on that rain-cleansed sky, near enough to lift on your arms, yet farther than the farthest reach of your imagination! It burned, it danced, it beckoned, then almost touched you as a peacock eating from your hand; then suddenly it flew away and vanished beyond space into its vibrant, poignant nothingness of blue. He who has not seen the Indian sky after a heavy rain knows not India!

In a few moments the Holy One came out to join us. At the sight of the heavens he raised his hands in a gesture of benediction, and spoke softly:

"O thou that art within me, quicken each being; quicken every soul so that by his own will he may do Thy Will, on which the worlds hang like pearls upon a thread!"

Then he asked us to go with him and bathe in the Ganges. He walked on a few yards ahead while we two brothers followed, the whole world dancing like singing light in my eyes. Hardly had we gone a hundred paces when a bystander

stopped us, asking, "Who is the man you follow?"

"What makes you inquire?" I replied.

"Why? Can I not see what I see? That man has attained the end of all wisdom. He walks like God's own son." The placid almost featureless face of my inquirer glowed with conviction, and his small eyes gleamed as he went on.

The next day we left Benares and as the train carried us from the holy city, I relived the experiences of my short stay there. It was not a farewell for I intended to return and see again the Blessed Master. I had but touched my lips, it seemed, to the sweet waters of his holiness; I had not quenched my thirst.

CHAPTER VI

IN THE HOUSE OF THE TEMPLE

CALCUTTA offended me. As a town it was bad enough fifteen years ago. Now with endless electric car lines, with numberless taxicabs as well as private automobiles, the second largest city of the British Empire was unendurable beyond description. Business was the genesis of this town when it was built and fortified in the last lap of the eighteenth century; and it will be business that, I hope, will kill it some day. The unbearable Gothic and French Renaissance architecture of the offices of the Government produced an excruciating effect on me, particularly when they were reinforced by European houses modeled after the horrible mediocre middle-class homes of the '70's in Britain and Germany. A thousand years from now when visitors marvel at the beauteous architecture of the Moghul India, they will marvel equally at the ugliness of British India. If there is anything exotically and unnaturally uglier than those Gothic horrors in

tropical Calcutta, I should like to be warned that I may forever avoid seeing it. I might advise a Western tourist not to judge India by Calcutta, for it would be nothing short of judging salvation by suicide. If you can imagine Brixton, East Ealing, and Bayswater transferred to the shores of the Ganges, then you have imagined the unimaginable—Calcutta.

It has a long river-front covered with jute mills owned by Scotchmen, Americans, Greeks, Jews, and Englishmen. And where there are bathing Ghauts for Hindus, the steps down are cast iron made in Sheffield. Where there are no Ghauts or factories, there are steamboat landing stations as ugly as any the world over. Added to this a horrible steam freight train line runs along the full length of the town up and down the river to carry jute from factory to warehouse, and back again. The only relief from the reign of ugliness is a few Indian temples and the Maidan.

The Maidan is a large park with gardens, cricket fields, and polo grounds, the center of which is occupied by the garrison called Fort William. Beautiful gray macadam and red gravel roads serpentine their way through the thick tropical verdure of this park which is, however, being rapidly encroached upon by statues and public buildings whose untropical character I have

already described. Even in the Maidan, if one has any hope left for Beauty, it is well crushed by the military band that plays indifferent Western music there with great gusto. Think of bits from Meyerbeer and Verdi, Victor Herbert, and Tchaikowsky—all groaning, booming, and bombarding your hearing where the sunlight falls on you like a thunderbolt of heat and the breeze is oppressive with a thousand whisperings of the forest lands where tigers creep taut as a rope stretched to the full, and leap on beasts twice their size, and the flute of the savage calls his beloved to the tryst through the thickly fragrant night. Where thousands of elephants used to walk through jungle lands, now honk and pass auto taxis intent on speed and profit. Speed and profit, yes, that is the breath and pulse-beat of modern Calcutta.

Yet, it is my own town, and I love it. The language of Bengal is spoken there as nowhere else. Every tongue has the style of Tagore's prose—pellucid, haunting, wicked. The first Bengali sentence that Calcutta spoke to me on my return was, "Come, amuse thyself with kind words; the day is young, and we all know that life is brief as a sparrow's hop." The speech of men is the ring of gold in which may shine the precious stone of Thought and there is no speech

as attractive as Bengali, unless it be Spanish—"A language of caprice and orderliness."

Of course, we Bengalis are tremendous talkers, but what a picturesque speech we utter! The best poet of India as well as the best scientist is a Bengali, and Jagadish Bose is as much of a poet (read his inaugural address before his institute) as Tagore is a scientist. So when I am accused of being a talkative Bengali I am complimented and I say to myself, "if you had such a tongue as mine you would talk also."

In a tumultous state of mind—horrified at Calcutta's ugliness, and thrilled at the Bengali speech —I reached our home. It was all there, yet all seemed so empty without my parents to welcome me. My widowed sister and her children and my brother, all put together, could not fill the place of my mother. They too felt as I did, and the home-coming, though sweet was infinitely sad. Everything reminded me of her, the pictures of Vishnu and Shiva on the white polished walls, which had been hers, the bare floors, immaculate, and red-tiled as before, the tree in the front yard and the empty backyard—each thing was familiarly itself, yet none spoke out its heart to me. As my brother and sister said: "The goddess is gone, only the devotees are left." Then I went to look at our family temple. How beautiful it

was and how old! It had been ours for many, many centuries. I was told that it had hardly any beams and rafters and that all its three stories were held up by cunningly contrived arches—the product of an art and a science that are no more within the command of the Master builders. It was strange to think that here I might have remained to carry on the tradition of my family in peace, instead of leaving all in exchange for the strange turbulent years in a foreign land. Something had always driven me from the settled path, some urge toward an unknown goal, where should await me "The Thousand Faced One" at last.

I had reached home in the morning, and after the usual greetings and the sorrow-suppressed short speeches to one another, I walked to the Ganges to bathe. The river itself was the same, in spite of the new pest of motor boats that floated on it. Hundreds of people were bathing in the tawny waters. Many were chanting praises to God, and many more, mostly the young, were playing water-football. It shocked me at first, but I, who have loved land-football, could have nothing against it on water and, in fact, this new game was a rare display of dexterous swimming and whalelike kicking. It made me laugh to watch the players bob up and down in the sacred waters, not to pray to God, but to hit a

ball. Surely, no game has such amusing fouls—one boy I noticed shoved his opponent's head way down under him into the water; the submereged one could not shout "Foul!" so he sent the most eloquent bubbles of complaint up to the surface. "Foul, foul!" everybody else shouted and at last the poor chap came up more to take a breath of real air than to make good the foul played on him. He was all sneezes and coughs.

I compared this with my own youth. I too swam the Ganges as well as they. But I felt that these boys had more life than the youth of my day. Cheered by this sense of progress I looked at the barks—not the motor and steam launches—but those which were flying ochre or turquoise-colored sails, and were going northward before the blast of the monsoon wind. The full-blown sails under which sat sailors bare to the waist, were the old, old, symbols of life. You may see them still on the Nile, on the Euphrates, on the Yangtze, and on the Ganges, uninterrupted and untrammeled by the vulgarity of progress. These sails had carried hundreds of generations up and down the river, and the sight of them, ochre-colored and unfurled, swimming gaily between tawny waters and emerald horizons, set my heart aching strangely.

I must not delude the reader into believing that

the moment of reunion was a perfectly happy one for our family. It took nearly two days for us to overcome strange obstacles of thought and make the necessary adjustment to them. I had to unlearn many things. For example, in America young and old smoke together, but in India one does not smoke in the presence of one's elders, whether relatives or friends. Since I am the youngest I had no end of elders in my family and the result was that I could hardly light a cigarette and smoke for a few seconds, without hearing footsteps which were the signal for me to fling the cigarette at once from the window, and sit still like a nice boy. It was agonizing to see a good cigarette smoking itself out of existence just outside. And I took the only way out of that difficulty—I gave up smoking. The cigarette episode proved to me beyond the shadow of a doubt that in my family we have an extraordinarily large number of elderly relations.

I must say also that besides unlearning many things, I was forced to learn. The younger members of the family, mostly my nephews and nieces, were very forward and assertive; I said to myself, "They have no manners at all. Why, when we were their age—eighteen or twenty—we were seen, never heard! The young are a horrible spectacle nowadays, the world over," I grumbled.

"No doubt they have their excellence, but that does not excuse their demerits. Imagine young people thirty years ago arguing to prove one of their seniors wrong! We never did such rude things." Now my nephews and nieces not only contradicted me, but told me to my face that I was not good but—goody-goody! I was so enraged that I could have murdered the lot of them, and felt no regret.

Every dog must have his day, however, even these modern youngsters. My niece told me that she thought men ought to attempt to "line up" to the women. As if they had done anything else these centuries! She added insult to injury by saying that a man like me, who relaxes too much at home, will not be tolerated within another twenty years. I was advised to keep up to the mark at home as I did abroad. Then another niece, an orthodox soul, enjoined upon me two baths and three meditation hours a day. She also thought my relations with God were too loose. Now I asked the traveled reader if this does not sound like his own home-coming. I have since then decided to live on steamships and Pullman trains. Never shall I willingly go where the young are shaping the future nearer to their heart's desire.

I have a nephew, a lad of twenty or there-

abouts. He and his friends opened my eyes to another aspect of modern Indian life. They are all University men and not a single one of them has any respect for the Western mind. I remember that when I was a boy of their age, I went to the Occident to learn at its feet. The young college men of India, to-day, would rather sit—not at the feet—but on the head of the West. I had one unforgettable afternoon with these youngsters. There were four of us, myself and two students of physics and one medical student who was very fair, with a round face, pug nose, and extremely strong ungracious chin. The other two were of a professional and retiring type, as dark as ripe olives, and with exquisite features, but they both lacked strength of jaw, and looked very much alike.

The young doctor began the conversation by saying: "Civilization comes from the East as does the sun. The West has nothing to teach us."

"But is not Medicine Western?" I asked. "Hippocrates, Harvey, Pasteur—"

He said, "But what about our Hindu Medicine, Ayuarveda?" (Translated, 'how to lengthen life,' which is our word for medicine.) And Chemistry? Has the East known less of these than the West? Has it not contributed just as many valu-

able truths? Even now we find that the majority of the people of India live by the aid of old Hindu medicine and few ever get assistance from the West. You forget, sir, I am afraid you take the sordid European's evil interpretation of our history and science. There are thirty Indians who go to Hindu practitioners to one who receives aid from European doctors. In the face of that——"

"But you must admit that some things are lacking to our science," I ventured meekly.

"Whatever it lacks in one way it can supply in another." He was firm. "The West may teach us something of surgery, but we can teach it the cure of leprosy. Does it not rather balance the account?" questioned this aggressive young hopeful.

"Surely in physics and chemistry Westerners can teach us a lot." I turned to the physicists, but I am afraid I had mistaken their meekness.

"What can these aggressive barbarians teach us more than we ourselves have taught them?" answered one.

"What did we teach them, by the way, for they think of us as savages?" I remarked.

A flood of eloquence was the reward of my retort. "Did not we Hindus teach the Arabs algebra and the decimal system of notation and numerals, and did not the Arabs give these to the

Western savages? Did not the Chaldeans, another Eastern people, teach them Astronomy? Did not China teach them how to make gunpowder and the mariner's compass? Did not Persia invent paper, the very thing on which printing—a Chinese invention—depends?"

The second physicist added to the list: "Did not India teach Pythagoras the scales of music—the very word, Pita Guru (Pythagoras) is Sanskrit—Father, Teacher. India has her own geometry, her own mathematics, her own art, science, and philology. Should we bow to the Western savage simply because he has the lung power to shout that he is superior? He has invented poison gas, liquid fire, and peace proclamations, then he comes to us, Bible in one hand and hand-grenades in the other. Who is savage—he or we? They from the West send us whiskey with machine guns and we offer them Gandhism. Who is more spiritual, who more civilized, they or we?"

Here the medical student put the finishing touch to the afternoon's argument: "Until the eighteenth century, the East and West were abreast of each other. If one were more advanced than the other, surely it was the East. Since the crusades and before the eighteenth century, the Western swashbucklers came to us for gold, silk, Damascene work, and the real arts of

civilization. They kept on coming as beggars to the gate of a royal palace. Till the eighteenth century they were our debtors, then they stole a march on us when they superseded man and animal-power by steam and electricity. During all these thousands of years, civilization was the gift of the East to the West. Only a hundred out of thousands of years is European; their civilization began with the steam engine and will end with aërial navigation. In a hundred more years, they are finished—and their souls dead. I grant you that the nineteenth century is theirs, but not the other hundreds of years before when they took and we gave!"

"But that hundred years is something, isn't it?" I asked.

"Give us time. Let us have the equivalent of those hundred years with all their material facilities and I can wager that our splendid Asiatic genius and concentration will in the end give them a better science than their own. We shall beat them at their own game. Bose, Sah, Dutta, Ray, Ghose, Rahman, Noguchi are illustrious names in science already. In thirty-five years, working under discomfort and positive discouragement, the Asiatic genius has already shown what it can do. I repeat, give us a hundred years with full facilities; that is all we ask, and then the West will do

what it did before: it will come to the East for culture and for civilization."

I said, "I am glad to hear you talk like that. It illustrates the difference of your generation from mine. In mine we did not believe in anything hardly, not even in our own genius or race."

"We are hoping, sir," he said eagerly, "to bring in the new spirit. We are working against adamantine obstructive conspiracy of the Westerners who have helped and taught the world to think that Asia has always been backward and always inferior. You know, an ant grows wings to fly, but no sooner does it hop off the ground than the insect-eating bird catches it in midair and devours it. The Western ant is growing wings of vanity. Once it flies, the bird of the East will swallow it. It is a pity that you have lived so long in the West; it has dazzled your eyes, but it cannot dazzle ours. Our generation in Asia will brush the Western fly out of existence."

When they left me I felt drowned in melancholy. Could it be possible that boys, hardly twenty years younger, could be just the opposite of what we were at that age? I do not mean that they were wrong; there was a greal deal of sense in what they said, but why so much optimism? It sounded so crude, so vulgar. There was no difference between these Indian youths who

wanted to brush the Western gadfly out of existence, and the Tradesman on my ship coming over, according to whom the Nordic race was ordained to rule (as slaves) all other races. Yet perhaps, I thought, boastfulness is only natural to the injured vanity of the young men of a long-conquered race. Still the seed of the next war was being planted: arrogant West fighting the new arrogant East, and whose fault was it? Then I remembered the words of the Holy One of Benares. The running of the universe was not in my hands —I must not give up the thought of Being for the thought of Doing. I must cease wishing to push the universe toward the pet goal of my fancy, and suffering because it was impossible. The Holy One was not the only Oriental prophet to remind me that I was not my brother's keeper, but his lover.

In passing, I may remark that the speech of the Indian young of to-day is not poetic and picturesque as it was thirty years ago. They speak with a realistic turn of phrase scarcely mitigated by a fluid use of historical fact. Instead of inventing a story in order to illustrate a point, the intelligent young man quotes an event in history. This is the beginning of a mental barrenness which will kill our fertile imagination; I can forecast a day that I shall live to see, when no Hindu will

make his point without quoting abundant statistics. The pestilence of figures is spreading from mind to mind.

From the younger generation I went to my brother and sister for protection. It was evening already. We sat on the roof under the starry sky—velvety black—from which the stars hung so low and warm that one could almost pluck them like grapes. But to-night even the stars were out of key. In that darkness we spoke of our parents and, presently, all our talk concentrated upon our mother.

My sister, it appeared, had for her the same worship as my brother and I. She came to know her long before we did, because she was about fifteen years older than my brother who was separated from me by four years. Doubtless, she could tell us much about her that would be new to us.

I had found my sister little changed. She had never resembled the rest of us—she had lighter skin, "coffee tempered by cream," my brother used to say, not coffee-clear like ours; her nose was aquiline, almost Semitic, her eyes were slanting, not round, darkened by long black lashes; there was some gray now in her thick jet hair and a line or two in that smooth brow, but nothing else, save her white widow's sari, spoke of any change.

In the darkness, I could distinguish nothing but the whiteness of her dress, but I knew that its severity was unmitigated by any borders of colorful design. She had never worn ornaments even in her youth. Great was her austerity, and fortunately she was very strong; none of us could remember a day when she felt tired enough to omit the fulfillment of a single duty. She lived on two small meals a day—altogether one-half a pound of rice and a pound of milk,—while she superintended the work of a temple, fed forty or fifty people, meditated on God three solid hours every day, beside taking care of a daughter-in-law, son, and grandson. She gave an hour and a half each day to her grandson, as a part of religious communion. But in spite of her competence, she was not like our mother; she had a plethora of common sense. Once when a European lady had invited her to tea, my sister inquiring the hour and hearing that it was half-past four, answered, "Oh, then I am sorry to say that it will be impossible for me to come as the important preparation of God-business begins after four and if I do not attend to it, the even-song will not be as good as usual."

Such a reply would have been impossible from my mother; to her God was a whim, not a heavy weight on her mind. I am certain that she would

have found as much of Him in a teacup as in an even-song.

While I was thinking of these things, my sister was saying: "To me, Mother gave different instructions from yours, my brothers. I was taught only stories and songs of devotion. I do not know whether she had a premonition that I should become a widow at twenty-two, but none the less, she taught me as if she felt certain of it, her sweet understanding firmly paving the road, so that it would be firmer under my feet at the bleak hour of calamity. And I believe that was why she had me taught English."

I expressed surprise at this for my mother herself knew not how to read or write. My sister explained that Mother had said to her:

"I belong to the age when wisdom came to men's hearts naturally, but thou, my child, art born in a time when only printed words are considered true. Learn English, my daughter; it is the ruler's language and since thou canst not rule men without some cunning, the English tomes may help thee to hold thy place in this world."

"It did serve me in good stead after my husband's death," went on my sister. "But, thank God, I have forgotten all of that language now."

"Why?" I asked.

"Oh, it has so little wisdom and not much

beauty. The last story I read in English was about a dead man's ghost who tells his son how he, his father, was murdered; then the young prince, an innocent dreamer, kills an old fool, whose daughter's heart he breaks and fights her brother at her funeral. Later, the prince is killed by the brother whom he kills as well. It has luscious words in it, for an innocent young man's sorrow tastes sweet to the reader; but how can it be a tale of wisdom which our mother would have had me learn? Can ghosts be so revengeful? Is it right to tell a mother that she is unchaste, and all because of the idle talkativeness of a good-for-nothing Spirit who should go to Heaven instead of walking about at night to poison his son's life with cruel thirst for vengeance? That tale destroyed all my ambition to know English. Thou dost know the language well; was I not right to give it up?"

"Yes, that wanton tale of beauty should discourage anybody." Thus I disposed of Prince Hamlet.

My sister resumed: "I took to learning from mother all the stories about our ancestor Chaitanya. She began them all in the same way. 'Listen, O, listen to the prophet of love! He was born to preach love to Hindu and Mohammedan alike in order to show that there is only

One God, though we give him many names, and he was our ancestor.' Chaitanya left home at the age of sixteen to acquire knowledge. When at last he was pronounced to be the wisest of young men, he returned home with his Commentary on the Gita that had earned him the highest honor. But on the boat crossing the Mother Gunga he met an old man who discussed the Gita with him, and defeated him in the ensuing argument: Chaitanya asked the sage, who knew the Gita so well, where he kept his Commentary. The old one answered: 'I destroyed it when I went in quest of holiness.' In amazement Chaitanya asked, 'What is holiness?' But the old man made no answer. Before the boat reached the other shore, Chaitanya too destroyed his Commentary, throwing it into the river. The sage said: 'Turn the boat back and let us retrieve it.' But Chaitanya said: 'You did not preserve a better Commentary than mine so why should I stoop to save that sinking bundle of vanity?'

"After his home-coming, he found life intolerable; his parents wished him to marry an eligible damsel, but Chaitanya slunk away at night and was gone fourteen years. When he came back, the illumined Saviour, he passed through a town where a band of ruffians set upon him and beat him and robbed him, taking his money in order to

buy drink; but Chaitanya cried out to them, 'Behold, I will give you love which will buy you drink that will quench the eternal thirst—I will give you God!

'Though you have struck me,
You have made my blood flow with pain,
But here is my love that has broken out of my heart,
Take that as recompense for your stone and your sword!'

"And these wicked souls that hit and slashed his face became his first followers. The river of love that rose from Chaitanya's feet flooded the world."

"How old wert thou, Sister, when Mother taught thee this story?" I asked.

"I was fourteen. After that she taught me line after line of the story of Savitri and how she saved her husband from death. Next I memorized the trial of Sita. When I grew to be a woman, I was made to fast twenty-four hours in seclusion with her and in that seclusion she taught me Gita Govinda, the Song of Songs, and imparted the secret and wisdom of love to my heart." Suddenly, she stopped to ask me, "How do Western mothers teach their daughters the art and wisdom of love?"

"Am I a woman or a Westerner that thou shouldst ask me that?" I questioned.

"Men always insist on remaining ignorant," she retorted and went on with her story. "I learned to cook, to serve dinner, how to dress for cooking, then how to dress for dinner after cooking. The garment of the kitchen may be worn only after an arduous bath and the cleansing of the body. Once the cooking is done, the garment of the kitchen must be put away and the garment of the feast donned. I was not allowed to rest in the afternoon in the dress of the feast. . . . Oh, there were a thousand little things that the woman-mind picks up as a miser gathers his pennies—there was the evening toilet, the meditation—all these things was I taught as well as the work of pleasing a husband. But now I seek only to please God," she concluded.

"How much Sanskrit dost thou know, Sister?" I asked.

"A few hymns. The one I love most is: 'Those who with steadfast love worship Me, seeking Me in all things, and all things in Me, shall attain the supreme light.' I weary of all this; I hunger for the stealthy one—Death!"

Something in her voice made my brother who had been silent all this while ask gently, "Dost

thou weary of us, my sister? Dost thou not love us?"

"O ho! What idle talk," she expostulated. "If I do not love you both—the images of herself—would I yet cling to this dancing dust?" She turned to me: "Did I not fast for thy home-coming so that all the impurity of life might be cleansed and the paths of thorn turned into a river of blessing? Were she here she would have fasted to purify her thoughts in order to mirror for other souls their own purity. Self-cleansing cleanses the world,' she said once—and, thinking of her, I fasted and prayed to make myself and the world worthy of thy home-coming."

We were obliged to reassure our sister who was as conscientious in her affections as her duties. After a little more talk she rose to go, saying:

"Now I must seek slumber; in old age two days' fasting feels like a week of it. My prayers have been heard; thou art home again and at peace with thy soul."

We lingered, happy in talk of our mother; and then my brother began to tell me gradually the story I had waited so long to hear—the story of his own life. But not only that night, but many others passed beneath the stars before all of it was finished.

CHAPTER VII

MY BROTHER'S STORY: THE CHILD

"I HAD hardly set foot into my eighth year," began my brother, "when one morning Mother sent me down to open the garden door and let in one of the servants. As I walked through the flowers, I was thrilled by their colors and fresh perfume. I am glad I looked at everything, for it was the last time in my life that I was to feel the poignant beauty of things as they are, without also sensing the ever-present closeness of death. I was walking very slowly and this was extremely fortunate, for behold, only half a dozen yards away, coiling near the door, the king cobra raised his head! He must have heard my footsteps for he was making ready to strike. At that moment I received the most powerful shock of my childhood and I cannot explain to this day my complete presence of mind. I pulled out a stake about two feet long from one of the rose plants that was growing around it, and before the partly sleepy snake had spread his gray-brown hood to

its full size, I smote him so hard that his neck broke almost in two. The uncoiled rest of his body rose and fell like a whip-lash in an attempt to wind around my leg or hand. I struck on his head again and again till the whip-lash rose no more; it pulsated with life for a moment or two, then grew still. When I opened the door over the body of the snake and ordered the servant to step carefully, she nearly fainted when she understood what I had done. She carried me up to my mother saying, 'He is born to be a King for he has slain the King of Serpents.' Mother only smiled with the peaceful assurance of love, but that afternoon she started to teach me our Bible, the Bhagavad Gita. I do not see why she began it so early in my life, when the rest of you did not have it until after you were fourteen."

"Thou wert years older than any of us in spirit. She knew it well enough," I said.

"Nay, she knew that the sudden discovery of the viper in the midst of the glow and richness of the morning freshness of our garden had opened an unknown window for me. I felt that I was looking at a world where gall and nectar grew together. Good and evil were but two branches of the same tree. It was not a pleasant awakening at the age of eight and perhaps that was why mother chose to give me the Gita.

"Her method of teaching it was unique. She began by telling me to shut my eyes and then urged me to imagine that my fingers were grappling and crushing a hundred vipers that would kill me were I not able to kill them. With the help of my recent experience, she made me realize this imaginary thing so completely that I can never forget the sense of crushing a hundred little poisonous creatures in my hand. When, after a few days, she was convinced that I could vividly imagine this thing, she said: 'This is the lesson of the Gita. Now we are ready to begin the book.' The explanations she gave and the comments she made I find are just as sound to-day as they were then. Hast thou read our Bible recently?" he asked abruptly.

"Yes," I answered. "And my recent reading verified what I too learned from Mother years ago."

My brother nodded and resumed his story. "I find that every time I read the Gita I verify what she taught me, yet she was not learned, and how she pierced the symbolism of it passed my understanding. She began by giving me a summary of the poem. It was dry and clear; she could be dry sometimes when she discussed philosophy.

" 'Notice, my son, who opens the song. Dhritarashtra, the King of India. He, the blind King,

is holding converse with Sanjaya, the clairvoyant. Whatever the King wishes to know, Sanjaya who can see anything anywhere reports to him. The Sightless One asks: 'Tell me, O Sanjaya, how the battle of religion progresses. My hundred sons are at war with their cousins who are only five in number, and I would fain know who is winning the battle, my sons or their enemy, the Pandavas, the fierce children of my brother Pandu?'

" 'Sanjaya (who, as I have said, could see anything at any distance) answers that the five brothers, sons of Pandu, are under the leadership of Arjuna whose charioteer is God, Shree Krishna. And as the chariot is driven into action Arjuna says to his God-charioteer, 'Oh, Madhava (another name of Shree Krishna), I pray thee stop the chariot before the contending armies.' He then adds, 'I do not wish to damn my soul by killing anyone in battle; I am willing to abandon this contest for the throne, its glory and exaltation!'

"But," my brother pauses, "it is idle to repeat what thou knowest so well already."

I persuaded him, however, to give me a minute account of what our mother had taught him, for it was not only precious to me to hear again from his lips the old lessons of my childhood, but I was

deeply interested to find that she had stressed for him different points from those which she had emphasized in my education, and it helped me to understand more clearly not only her singular insight but all that had gone to form the remarkable character of my brother. So he went on with his account.

"Then followed the long dialogue of eighteen chapters between the God-charioteer and Arjuna, about the meaning of killing and not killing, about birth and death, and realization of immortality. All that dialogue is reported by Sanjaya to the blind King in his palace, as if the battle were between the two halves of the King's very self, witnessed by the eye of his soul symbolically represented by Sanjaya. As one goes on and on with the problems of life and their solutions, as pronounced by the God-charioteer to Arjuna, one finally perceives the battle-field, the battle, and the outcome, to be all within ourselves, and then, suddenly the key to it is given to us by these lines: *'Nahi Mam Sakyase drastum ananaiva sachakshusa Dhumenabryate agni yathadarsa malenacha'* —('The dust hides the mirror, the smoke hides the flame, so the sight of thy outer eye blinds thy soul's insight; behold Me, thy true Self, with the eye of thy Spirit!')

" 'The symbolism of the Gita is now clear,' said

our mother. 'The battle is within ourselves. The blind King is Everyman beholding his own problems with the very eye of his own spirit.' I asked mother who were the hundred sons and what they symbolized.

" 'Those are our human problems,' she said—'a legion of them. The only way we can conquer them is to use our five senses and their spokesman the Mind (Arjuna) who, with the power and insight of our Soul, Shree Krishna, is the God in each being. But it is not enough to use the senses for the mind; we must go further and control the mind and use it too as a servant of our soul. Thus we increase our soul's sight—the third eye. Dost thou understand now why every man puts a mark each dawn upon his forehead—the foreigners call it the caste mark, but in truth it is the mark that symbolizes to each man his third eye. We begin each day by marking our foreheads and reminding ourselves so to act and live each moment that our soul-eye may soon open wide and behold Him who is waiting to become visible. There is no escape for us from the purpose of the Gita.'

"Without raising any further questions at the outset, we went on studying the poem. On an average we spent upon it three hours a week. In the course of a year, I nearly mastered its

salient stanzas. The advantage of being taught by word of mouth is that the unconscious being assimilates what is congenial to the spirit and the rest it rejects despite all the effort of the conscious mind to crowd the soul. Is not everyone of us a blind king? Mother bade me notice how the characters in the poem speak in the first person. It is I, the infinite consciousness talking to I the finite listener and wanderer. Finally, God says, 'I am the taste in the water, the light behind the sun and the moon, the sanctity in the Vedas, the humanity of Man and the sound wandering to its silence in the sky. I am the golden thread of continuity running through all things, the seed eternal blossoming in each being.'

"In each man crouches the silence, the enigma of all existence, as the tiger crouches in the densest jungle. 'There is no answer buried outside ourselves,' Mother said, 'for the claws of our spirit to dig up as the bear grubs for roots; our questions are answered from within.'

"To illustrate her meaning further, she told me this story. 'Once in many years, my child, Mushiknava, the musk-deer of the hills, is haunted by the breath of musk-perfume in its nostrils. It does not know whence that odor comes, but it is like the call of Krishna's flute which none can resist. So the Mushiknava runs from jungle to jungle in

pursuit of the musk. The poor animal gives up food and drink, sleep and rest. As a child seeks the echo, calling here while echo answers from over the ravine, then crossing the ravine and hearing from this side the answering cry, so it is with the Mushiknava. It knows not whence the musk calls—but it must follow over ravines, forests, and hills until at last hungry, tired, exhausted, it steps carelessly, slipping from the crest of some rock and falls mortally broken in body and soul. As a last act before dying it takes pity on itself and licks its breast—and there, there! Behold, the musk-pouch has been growing in its very own body. It pants deeply, trying to inhale the fragrance, but it is too late. O, my blessed son, do not seek for the perfume of God without, and so perish in the jungle of life, but search thy own soul, and lo! He will be there. Do not fail to feel Him within, no matter how thy senses insist that He is like the deceptive echo—outside thyself.'

"Since thou art interested in these memories," went on my brother, "I must tell thee of a kind of trick she used to teach me, before I was initiated into the priesthood."

I should perhaps explain here to my Western readers that being Brahmin children it was our right to receive initiation into the priesthood at

the age of fourteen whether or not we chose later to follow that profession through life.

"Every evening just before I fell asleep she would quote certain lines of the Gita. At first it would be our creed: 'When virtue is in decadence, and vice in ascendance to bring out the rebirth of righteousness, God, indifferent to time or place, incarnates Himself among men. God has incarnated Himself many times before and shall again many times in future. Refuse not to welcome His Divine Recurrence, for that man shall suffer more than all others who shuts the door of the future in the face of the Newborn Truth!'

"After many, many repetitions and embellishments of these lines, she taught me one day a new stanza. My eyes were heavy with sleep and so I said it only once. 'Who sees God in other beings, treating them as he treats himself, that man God loves.'

" 'I am too sleepy to repeat these words,' I murmured.

"Mother answered, 'Once is enough if it is with all thy heart; then the force of thy sincerity will throw the words fathoms deep into the waters of thy dream until they reach the calm places of unconsciousness. Sleep well, blessed child.'

"The next morning out of my memory came those words as if they had been mine many years!

Not only when she was teaching me the Gita, but on many another occasion she would throw a precious thought into my consciousness just when I was almost engulfed by the flood of sleep.

"It was when I was about ten that the next great experience of my childhood came to me, my adventure with the cross-marked Christian tiger.

"Thou rememberest Ghond, the hunter?"

Remember him—indeed, I did, the extraordinary old man, mighty hunter, and companion of my childhood!

"Thou must assuredly see him whilst thou art here," continued my brother. "It will delight the old fellow's heart."

"What about the Christian tiger? I remember hearing of it when I was a child," said I, "but I have clean forgotten the story."

"This is what happened," my brother began. "Father, as thou knowest, was originally trained to be an engineer; he gave that up and went into the law, though his real talent was music. He was a great master of melody, but he never would take a penny for his performances, thinking it would demean him. Now thou knowest why we are a poor family," said my brother smiling. "If father had taken half the gifts the Rajahs offered him for his playing, we would be many flights above the floor of want, but since he believed in

being a proud and poor Brahmin, we must continue to inhabit the lower stories.

"At the time we came across that Christian tiger, there was a property dispute going on in the hills and forests of Chhota between two small Rajahs, each of whom claimed the same forest as his hereditary property. The Court sent Father to survey the entire estate in dispute and bring back an accurate map of it. Both the Rajahs respected Father's impartial spirit, and both of them did their best to bribe him! Elephant-hunts, tiger-shooting, good music, long seances on poetry and philosophy were offered for his pleasure.

"Ghond the hunter and I went with Father on this expedition. It was the first time I had ever seen the hills. Suddenly, and from nowhere, on the borders of Bengal, they rose blue and distant. I shouted to Father, 'Look, there are blue clouds in these parts.' Ghond said, 'Your son calls the Sky-complexioned Ones, clouds.' My father explained that these appearances were not mobile and rootless, as the clouds, but forest-clad hills as rooted to the ground as the trees that are rooted in them, not 'sky-complexioned' but 'sky-drinkers,' he said, 'is their name.'

"When we reached Chhota, we descended from the railway goods van—the line was new then and

goods vans were the only cars running. Outside the little station-house stood six elephants caparisoned in scarlet and gold. The oldest one had a pearl-wrought lace-work on his forehead to shade his eyes from the sun which was apparently the excuse for showing off some pounds of excellent pearls. The old bull's tusks must have been at least five feet long and were covered with rings of gold. We learned that on every celebration of the Rajah's birthday a new pair was put on his tusks. We climbed up a ladder and sat on his back while Ghond took a smaller elephant. The word was given and the old fellows started. It seemed strange to me that none of the elephants had bells, but that soon explained itself, for hardly had we gone twenty paces from the station-house when the expedition plunged into the jungle. We had twelve miles of it to traverse. The tracks were not broad, and every now and then trees brushed the elephants' sides, so hanging bells would have been torn off by the brushing branches. It was wonderful to feel those tides of green break upon the sides of the elephants. I felt as though I were on a ship, and as a ship quivers when a wave smites it, so did our elephant when certain heavy branches tickled his thick hide." I could well imagine it, for a tickled elephant is the happiest mass of flesh in the world!

"It was a devious journey, up-hill, down ravines, circuitous like a python's coil and unsafe as a secret on a gossip's tongue. At last we emerged from the forest, but I, who had been holding loosely to the elephant's back, suddenly let go. He, Shiva knows why, lurched just as he was reaching the open road, and I fell to the ground, then rolled over under the belly of the beast. All I saw was a big leg large as a banyan tree-trunk raised above me; it would surely come down upon me in an instant. Like the hiss of a serpent came a sound sharp and loud from the Mahout—the black mountainous mass above reared, it literally rested in the air for a moment and instead of one leg all four of them were above me; I shut my eyes in terror and waited for the painful, crushing weight of the elephant's entire body on my little self. But nothing came. I decided to open my eyes, and suddenly a thick, warm, soft thing pulled me by the hand. Then it let go and dove under me. Suddenly, I was hoisted right up into the sky from under the brute's belly by his own trunk. The elephant held me like a trophy for all to gaze on, then trumpeted joyously. He put me on my feet upon his tusks, whence I climbed over his head past the Mahout, to my former seat on his back.

"Father scolded me: 'Sit tight and behave thy-

self.' We resumed our march, reaching the Rajah's palace about half-past four. It was a beautiful sight; an ivory-white façade of tall arches leaping up before us at the end of the red road.

"The major-domo showed us into our quarters —an enchantment of marble walls and sunlit porticos that gave on forest lands gleaming in saffron and green. The sunset and the darkness fell like heavy wings. In the intense stillness horns sounded from the forest lands announcing the Rajah's return from the chase.

"About eight in the evening, after a hearty dinner, we were received by the Rajah, dressed in Tussar silk. As my father went forward toward his couch where he was resting on a mountain of pillows, the Rajah rose and saluted saying, 'The Lord of all castes, I sálute the Brahmin.' Father said, 'Blessings pour upon thy royal head.' We were in a small reception room, white and austere; except for the two or three couches laden with blue silken pillows, there was not an ornament of any kind. Father and I sat on a couch facing the Rajah. They talked of the journey. One said that the road was as though paved with ruby, the other said the jungle was like an emerald jewel, on and on without the slightest mention of my fall from the elephant and narrow escape from

death! So I learned that it is not polite to talk of personal events with strangers.

"We spent the following week riding elephants, wandering in the jungle, and listening to music and poetry. Nobody mentioned work. Those were great times. It is different now and as natural to work as it was to idle then.

"Finally, when all the members of the chain gang were assembled, we started for the jungle which was a mile away—three elephants, twenty men under Ghond's leadership, a guide, and we two. Three days we went into the heart of the forest, reaching at last a river about forty feet broad, where the disputed territory began, and we pitched camp.

"That very night a tiger captured one of the chain-gang men and disappeared with him. However, the work began the next morning. It was all noise; the men cutting trees, or pushing them down by making the elephants rub their sides against them; wild birds, squirrels, monkeys were shouting and screaming; and once in a while herds of wild oxen crashing through the forest.

"We slept in our tents ringed in by fires that all night long the men fed with large logs. So went many days, swiftly as shadows at sunrise.

"I slept with Ghond in the same tent. One morning, as I lay wide-awake, I saw that his bed

was empty. I was frightened and raised my head to look for him. Behold, at the tent's mouth sat a mountain of yellow crossed with black patches —What could it be? I looked and looked—it was surpassing strange, and suddenly in a flash of terror the realization came to me that it was a tiger, but instead of being striped, his yellow skin wore black crosses like two deodar leaves lying athwart each other! There he sat like a tall watch-dog resting on his haunches. The flap-door at the tent-mouth moved with the breeze every now and then, and whenever the tiger tried to put his head inside the flapping canvas, it would hit his nose and he would withdraw hastily. I looked at Ghond's empty bed; apparently, the tiger had eaten him and was wondering whether to come in and eat me too. Again he tried to stick his head in, the tent door flapped anew, and he withdrew. Once, twice, thrice, this happened, then suddenly with a growl he was in, crouching at the foot of my bed. I lay quiet. Nothing moved inside that tent—and nothing moved inside me! Suddenly, the tiger growled uproariously. Then and there I gave up all hope of living and that gave me courage. I raised my head: lo, through the opening of the tent-door I could see the end of a rifle and something like a man behind it. Just then the tiger caught sight of me. Up to now, though his nostrils must have told him of my presence, I

had kept so still he had not seen me where I lay covered with much bedding. At first he was as surprised as I, but in an instant he yelled furiously and put his fore-paws on my bed. Thank God for the quilts! His paw rested on my leg—very heavy but not sharp. At this moment, the man behind the gun yelled, *'Oh re! Oh re!'* it was Ghond. I knew his voice.

"The tiger looked around, his head turned to the tent door, his claws still sticking to my quilt. He roared deafeningly. Then a shot rang out—and in a blinding spurt of blood, he bounded off his feet. Everything became confusion; the tent flew up and vanished out of sight, then fell, a growling, gurgling mass of canvas running red with blood that collapsed in a pile some ten feet away. Everybody was shouting from every direction. Elephants trumpeted and birds shrieked. Then all was still. The tiger was silent. The crimson-tinted canvas moved no more.

"Hastily, Ghond came to me, followed by my father who scolded with the sudden rage of nerves relaxed after mortal anxiety.

" 'Fool, hare-brained idiot, hast thou no more sense than a baboon, no more knowledge than a baby ass, no prudence in a single muscle of thy body? Worthless, shameless, heartless child! What wert thou doing with the flap-door of thy tent open?'

"Before I could explain, Ghond said, 'It was I who opened the flap-door and went out.'

"Father, his face a very thunderstorm, shouted, 'Thou savage! Barbarian of the first water, pearl of imbecility, blinder than blindness, knave of knaves, first and last ass of the Universe!' He paused and went on like a man in a daze, 'Let me think . . . Yes, art thou hurt, child?'

"I, who was now standing on my feet, replied, 'No, my Lord.'

" 'Come to breakfast as soon as thou art washed,' said Father. 'My nerves are all unstrung. As for thee, Ghond, after breakfast I shall hear thy account of this nefarious carelessness. Begone till then. My eyes catch fire at the sight of thy face.'

" 'Yes, your honor,' said Ghond. Then with a wink at me he went over to the crowd that was unwrapping the dead tiger from the tent canvas.

"After breakfast Father announced, 'I am suffering from loss of serenity.'

"Then he sent for Ghond, to whom, when he appeared, he said, 'Explain thy conduct. The Rajah's rifle is not thine. How didst thou come by it?'

"Ghond began, 'Oh, protector of religion, can a live hunter do anything but shoot? I am not a fish. I have been watching that cross-marked half-leopard and half-tiger for three nights now.

He is cunning as a Christian. Look, he broke through the ring of fire, at dawn when the men that feed it had retired into their tents to sleep. I smelt his presence in my sleep three nights in succession. This morning the stench was so intense that I went out to see where he was. I could not find him. Then I stole into your tent and took the rifle. When I had wind of him again, there he was playing with the flap-door of our tent, which I had left untied. I could not aim at his head, for every time I tried, the flap would move and interfere, as a gossip interferes with love.

" 'At last, suddenly, he ran inside. Then I hurried to give him the bullet ere he killed your son. That is all. Have I betrayed the trust that your sanctity put upon me? Look, the boy lives. He has eaten so that his belly is like a well-tuned drum.'

"Said Father, 'Yes, my son is a greedy child.' For it is not meet for the master to be voluble to his servant.

"Ghond gave me another wink and withdrew from our presence.

" 'Those low-born fellows do not know what it means to lose one's serenity,' said Father. 'Our day is ruined. We must meditate in order to compose ourselves.'

"The terrible experience of the tiger was too

much for me. It seemed that always some terror faced me in the midst of joy. The problem of good and evil obsessed my small soul. . . . When I returned home, I told my trouble to our mother and again she went to the Gita. One night at bedtime she knelt beside me. I can see it all now. The walls and cornices pale as old ivory, full of black arabesque designs, the large, brass candelabra in the corner of the room burning steadily, and her round face full of care above me. Canst thou not remember," my brother asked me eagerly, "how her voice grew low and clear-cut when she was agitated and her eyes were still as pools under threatening skies? Thus she looked as she spoke to me. Her green sari, fringed with silver, glistened.

" 'Thou must think not of evil or good, little son,' she said. 'Evil is as necessary as good, and God is beyond both. Hold to Him and good and evil will not torment thee, for He is Gunatita—beyond all qualities.'

" 'Mother,' I said, 'why are there not men only and no tigers?'

"But Mother replied, 'Why not only tigers and no men?'

"That puzzled me. But she went on: 'Evil may be just as necessary a stepping-stone to God as good. Listen to this story:

" 'When our ancestor, Chaitanya, was abiding

with his disciples in Nudia, the most devoted of them all was Haridas. Haridas was a trader of great wealth. One day he saw the Lord go by his shop. He looked at Shree Chaitanya's face, then at the pile of gold in the corner of his counting-house and said to himself, "That man is as the sun and with him goes the light of day. My gold pales near him." '

" 'With those words Haridas left wife, wealth, and children, and followed the Lord. And the Teacher loved him exceedingly.

" 'But during their stay in Nudia, Haridas committed evil, as thou shalt hear.

" 'The disciples were monks living with poverty. They went from house to house singing the praise of God. . . .

" 'The cleansing love runs like a river at thy door.
Come fill the chalices of thy heart.

" 'When the people heard such songs they made many offerings, but the monks took only enough for a day's meal. They never even accepted more than one Haritoki fruit, though it is small as a fig.

" 'One day, late in the afternoon, long after their midday meal, the Lord asked his disciples for one of these fruit, but the disciples had none

left to give except the ever-vigilant Haridas, who produced one from his begging bowl and gave it to the Master. The Lord said, "I am pleased. This fruit slakes my thirst as nectar that of the Gods. Yet, Haridas, how camest thou to have it?" '

" ' "To-day when I begged for fruit, they gave me many," ' said Haridas, the trader; " 'so I chose two, one to eat to-day, and the other to save up for an emergency." '

" 'But the Lord said, "Depart from me—thou art a householder, not fit to be the friend of Poverty. I send thee hence as one who by saving a fruit has shown himself the hoarder of goods. Go, go—thou art not of me." '

" 'Haridas fell at the Lord's feet and wept bitter tears, praying for mercy. But the Lord proved as moveless as the hills. At last, broken-hearted, Haridas, decided to leave. As a final request he said, "Lord, now I go to my home of shame to expiate my avarice; but tell me, I beg of you, may I ever again look upon your radiant feet?" '

" 'The Lord with firmness and fire said, "In a hundred lifetimes." '

" 'A hundred, Lord?' asked Haridas, for he feared that his ear misheard his Master's verdict.

" 'The Lord repeated, "In a hundred lives, and not even one less than a hundred, it must be." '

" 'Suddenly, like a man possessed, Haridas danced in joy saying, *"Peyechi, Peyechi*—I have found Thee, I have found Thee, O my King." '

" 'What insolence is this?' exclaimed the Lord.

" ' "But," Haridas cried, "a hundred lives are but a moment, O my King, if at their end they lead to Thee." '

" 'Then ravished with love, Chaitanya embraced Haridas and said, "Come, sweet son, let us sing the praise of God." '

" 'They praised God, my child, four and forty hours, rejoicing over Haridas's return to his King.'

" 'Haridas committed evil and evil in turn became his wing for flight,' Mother concluded. 'It is always so. Good and evil are both branches on the Tree of Life.'

"That had a profound effect on my sleep. I never rested better than that night. Next evening when Father visited Mother, she asked me to be with them, saying:

" 'My Lord, this child is not as the others. Wilt thou teach him God?'

"Father bent his head. His narrow temples and tall brow glistened. He said, after an age-long pondering, 'Why not send him to the Christian mission, or, tether him to a holy man?'

"Mother expostulated. 'The Christians may teach him God. The holy man may also teach the same thing, but the child is not the kind that will profit by these. He needs more love; he has mine. Reinforce mine with thine, my Lord. He is all truth, but if we are to make him True, we must love him doubly.'

"Father still pondered: in his veins were too much of mathematics and law and his pulse never beat fast. 'To make a man true we must love him. Is that what thou conceivest to be the solution?' he asked.

" 'My Lord, until a young soul has all the love it needs, it will not be true to its own truth.'

"Father was always guided by our mother and their talk bore fruit. Though he had had no religious experience himself, yet he believed in every religion and he tried to do his best for me. He had a deep appreciation and love of Mohammedanism and he taught me to love Moradali, his Mohammedan music teacher, in order to induce my love for music. I was so dogged in my devotion to that white-haired, white-bearded, and white-clad old man telling his beads of amber, that instead of Mother I used to send for him to tell me stories at bedtime.

"How often I remember the dark room, the sandalwood bedstead, heavy and ornamented like a big galleon, the evening dusk rushing in like cur-

rents of soot. There I would lie lost in my enormous bed with the old man sitting on its edge, a white wizard guiding a ship by the magic of his voice. Ah, what a voice! He was the only one left who could sing Dipak—the Fire and Thunder melody. His tones were deep and vibrant as a bull-frog's."

Moradali had been the dear friend of us all as children and I begged my brother to tell me more of him.

"I shall never forget two of his stories," my brother resumed. 'All religions should be the same thing, as all melodies are music,' Moradali would say. 'Instead, they all have the one trouble —Schism.'

" 'How did they get so, Grandfather?' I questioned.

"His voice deepened into a whisper, almost as if to tune it to the theme and the darkness about. 'The believers in the old days quarrelled. Some said the Prophet's grandsons, Hassan and Hoossain, must not be made Khalifa merely because they were descended from him. "We must elect the man who is most worthy to rule us and not the heirs of His Blood," said the people.'

" 'Ejid, the leader of the radicals, succeeded in poisoning Hassan; then he pursued the holy family, led by Hoossain, from desert to desert in order to kill them. This was a terrible war,

Grandson, Hoossain, with a few scores of followers and many, many women and children, was driven into the desert to perish there of hunger and thirst. So he made a dash toward the waters of Karbala. But between him and the waters stood Ejid's army. Flight into the desert spelt death, and so fight he must or die of thirst.'

" 'Hoossain was a great warrior. His men cut their way through the enemies' forces till they reached the river, but then they were beset from both banks; whenever men from Hoossain's camp reached the water's edge, the enemies' javelins, flying from every direction, killed them. Hoossain's army was so badly exposed in the flanks that it could not avail itself of any respite to fill the water-casks.

" 'At last Hoossain decided to wage a battle at night and made an attempt to fill the casks in the dark; but the enemy proved too vigilant. Still Hoossain fought on. The battle raged all night; like fiends of hell the enemy fell upon the dwindling army. Men killed men as butchers kill cattle. But at last, toward dawn, Hoossain's warriors cleared the place of the enemy and were able to fill their goatskin water-bottles. But when Hoossain came with his, it was broad daylight and he saw that there was blood in the water. His heart sank within him.

" 'The price of a drink is blood!' he cried.

"'At once he threw away his goatskin bottle and raised his face to Allah. He prayed as no man had ever prayed before.

"'Allah, Allah, Allah!' he cried. But Allah heard him not.

"'In the midst of his unfinished prayer an enemy hurled a javelin from across the river. It pierced Hoossain's heart and flung him into the water. There he lay, the last descendant of the Prophet, crying to Allah with his remaining breath, "The price of a drink is blood."

"Thou knowest," my brother commented, "Moradali was a Shia. He believed in the Prophet's descent. To him the murder of Hassan and Hoossain was the beginning of the end of the inner meaning of his religion.

"Another evening, Moradali sat on the edge of my galleon, as I lay in it. The darkness ran in like tides of soot. I begged him to tell me whether I would make a good Mohammedan. He laughed. How funny I thought him! 'Why dost thou wish to be a Mussulman?' he asked.

"'I have seen you pray to your God,' I said. 'You stand up straight, you kneel down, then you bend low and touch your face to the dust. I like to do that, Grandfather.'

"He answered, 'Allah needs not thy prayer. We, the old, pray enough to surfeit all His

hunger. Grandson, thy fat cheeks and drumlike belly are prayers enough. Allah is good—why should he wish thee to stoop and bend like an old fool?'

" 'But, Grandfather, your prayer is different from mine. It will please Him if I pray as you do.'

"Moradali chuckled again and said: 'All prayers are one. Allah is one. He is the grape; we call the fruit different names in different tongues, but does that change its taste? Even among Musselmans are Yogis as there are among the Hindus.'

" 'No, Grandfather!' I exclaimed in amazement.

" 'Yes!' he answered. 'Listen to the reed flute sing. The reed is cool as the water that sings, and hot as the sun that ripens its mouth. O listen to the reed flute sing:

" 'His holiness, Ali, the Prophet's first male disciple and his son-in-law, was a Yogi as a Hindu is. Ali loved the Prophet and was His friend in distress. All prophets have one pet disciple, the recipient of their inmost insight into Truth. Ali was such an one. The Prophet would lose himself in God-consciousness for days and he taught Ali how to achieve this state, in which, like a Hindu Yogi, one feels neither pleasure nor pain.

" 'One day, in a battle, a spear entered Ali's thigh. It stayed there, a very fountain of Pain.

The wounded man suffered no Hakim (doctor) to come near him lest it interfere with the battle. He sat on his horse and commanded the fortune of war. At last, when victory put its muzzle in the palm of his hand like a colt, Ali dismounted and went to camp, the spear deep in his limb.

" 'He would let no one pull it out; nor would he let the Hakim heal his wound. News of Ali's behavior reached the Prophet; but he told them to wait until prayer time.

" 'So, when the purple wings of evening settled down on the land and Ali sat down to prayer, the Hakim pulled out the spear that had entered his thigh, deep as the span of my hand. But Ali stirred not; nor felt the flow of blood. He was a Mussulman Yogi. He was lost in God.

" 'Only a shallow man changes his religion, my child, for a deep soul finds in his own the fruit of Life, and is certain that there God will meet his hopes and dreams. A Mussulman can be a Yogi as a Hindu is. Respect Mohammedanism, Grandson. Love it. But grow on thine own trunk. Envy not another's branch and leaves.'

"Blessed Moradali! I loved the old man."

"And how he loved us!" I exclaimed. "But what else did Father do for thee beside tying thee to Moradali's coat tail?"

"He told me many things himself," said my

brother. "But they were of the intellect. By coming in contact with his great and brilliant mind, I grew very keen-witted. I began to carry everything before me in the Christian school where he had sent me.

"As for the holy man, he prescribed for my cure. I could not abide one. All holy men seemed stupid to me. Until I was quite grown up, I despised holy men as cosmic loafers."

CHAPTER VIII

MY BROTHER'S STORY: THE SCHOOL-BOY

"THE Missionary school to which Father sent me was the same as thine. Dost thou remember the lame teacher that taught the first English Reader? How ill-paid education generally is can be gauged by that poor old man's salary and training. He received 30 rupees [ten dollars] a month. He was taught a little English by an Englishman who once employed him as a clerk, but, since his pay was low, the wretched man never had any money to purchase leisure or books with which to improve himself.

"He had been teaching the same English First Reader from time immemorial. He knew that Reader as a mariner knows his compass. Unfortunately for him, and unluckily for me, the year we began English this Reader was replaced by a different primer. At home we all learned our lessons with our elders; the son of a pariah learnt his from his father as did the son of the warrior

from his. How well it speaks for fathers we shall see presently.

"Perhaps because of his poverty and ill-fortune our teacher was a lazy man. When he was not asleep, he used to hit everybody at intervals. If our noise grew too loud to let him go on with his nap, he would suddenly get up from his chair and walk around the room thumping every boy on the head for making so much noise. As he went back he would remark, 'Do not make another sound, for next time I shall hit you harder.'

" 'But, sir, I did not make any noise,' one of the innocent protested.

" 'Well,' he answered from his chair, 'I can't walk about the room all day in order to learn who made the noise. Hold thy tongue and behave. Haven't I hit thee hard enough?'

"At last the day arrived when the lesson began with the new primer. The first word in it spelled —P S A L M.

"The teacher asked the first boy to pronounce it.

"The boy said, 'Pallum.'

"The teacher: 'Who taught thee that?'

"The boy: 'My father.'

"The teacher: 'Thy father! Why, he is an oil-vendor; he can't be right. Next.'

"The next boy answered, 'Sallum.' My father taught me, sir.'

"The teacher: 'Thy father is a Darwan (door-keeper) at a bank. He sees and hears English people. Yet his pronunciation of this word may not be right. Next!'

"More boys went on saying, 'Pallum' and 'Sallum.' Then came my turn. We all knew English, even my sisters, and I answered, 'Salm.'

"At this he flew at me. 'What, thou darest to drop two consonants at once, both P and L? Thy family know English, yet thou canst mispronounce this simple word.'

"He hit me with his cane again and again. After several minutes, he thundered at the class, 'You are dismissed. Go home. Come back after you have learned your lesson.'

"The next day, when he came into the class, he said to me, 'I looked into the dictionary. Salm is right.'

" 'Then why did you hit me?' I asked.

" 'Another word and I will hit thee again,' he shouted, and with these words he resumed the lesson of *Psalm*.

"That tells the story of the horrors of education that I endured when I was sent to study the Christian religion by my father.

"The poor lame fellow coached pupils in the evening at home, in order to make a little more money with which to support his family. He was so hard-pressed by poverty that to-day, when I re-

call his almost featureless face, nothing but pity rises in my heart for him.

"Mankind always starves its teachers and manages thus to keep them sufficiently and safely ignorant. Not only that lame teacher, but others whom I met later were almost all of them so ill-paid that they were forced to do miscellaneous tasks outside of school in order to keep body and soul together. It is not at all surprising that they had no desire left for self-improvement.

"I was the most brilliant student of my class. I stood first in every subject. Mother grew very suspicious of it all. One day she invited me to meditate with her. After ten minutes of it she said, 'Son, I cannot even meditate because of thee.'

"I was startled. 'Why, mother?' I said.

" 'If thou dost not abandon thy brilliancy in school, thy fate may be very bitter,' was her reply.

" 'But, Mother, why should I not be brilliant? Father is brilliant.'

" 'He is, my son. All thy life thou wilt succeed, yet success may become the poisoner of thy soul. Let me tell thee the story of Jibana, who was not deluded even by the touchstone—the philosopher's stone—that turns iron into gold.'

"I said, 'But Mother, it is not true that such a stone exists.'

"Mother answered without any hesitation:

'The Poet speaks as though it exists. Is not that enough? Never cast doubt on what the singer has put behind the song.'

" 'Wilt thou tell me please what this Jibana did with the philosopher's stone?' I requested.

" 'It is a story that abides in another story as the diamond heart of a witch lies in a box inside another box to which there is no key.

" 'Long ago, when our prophet ancestor was preaching that God's radiance is love and that he who loves is as good a Mohammedan as he is a Hindu, in the city of Murshidabad where the Nawab of Bengal built his seven palaces of Beauty, Chaitanya preached in the market-place. He went thither to sell the people God for their love. One day the Nawab's Prime Minister, a Mohammedan grandee, came in his ivory palanquin that was delicate as lace and strong as the elephant's tusks of which it was made. The palanquin-bearers were preceded by guards, with gleaming shields of brass and sabers that glittered like diamonds. They cleared the way before the Minister's palanquin, but when they came upon the prophet preaching to the little group, they found the people so lost in the enchantment of listening to Chaitanya that, though the guards prodded the crowd with their saber ends, the devoted listeners did not even turn their heads to see who was behind them.

" 'The Minister signed to the guards to desist, and alighting from his nest of ivory, walked to the prophet to hear his words; but the listeners were still so wrapt in the thought of God that they did not see this man dressed in jeweled robes like a lofty citadel of pride.

" 'The Minister was on the point of scattering the crowd with his whip made of threads of gold, but the Lord's word pierced his ears and nestled in his heart.

" 'He listened and still he listened. At last he knew that Chaitanya had revealed to him his own God—Allah! He began to cry in joy. He took off his jeweled robe and gave it to his guards, saying, "Put it on the next Minister of State. I go to sing the praise of God from door to door."

" 'From that hour he went with Chaitanya, preaching God to the world. And the Lord gave him a new name—Rupa Sanatan (The Radiance of the Eternal). It is said that wherever Sanatan went the world changed and put on the vesture of Godhood.

" 'At last when Chaitanya went away—some say he died, some say he went to Heaven direct—Sanatan could not bear to be without him. So he gave up preaching and went to Brindaban. There, on the bank of the black Jumna, he sat down to meditate and to commune with his Beloved. Rumors floated about that Sanatan had found the

philosopher's stone and had power to do miracles.

" 'Now begins the next story. There was a young man named Jibana who lived near our own village. He was a Pundit. He knew so much that there was nothing left for him to know, which troubled him exceedingly. One day someone said to him, "Thou who knowest so much, tell me, has thou the philosopher's stone?'

" 'Jibana answered, "No, I have not found it."

" 'The stranger advised him: "Go to Brindaban, seek out Rupa Sanatan. Ask him, and he will give it to thee."

" 'Next day Jibana went forth, as the song towards its echo and the arrow to the mark. But the way was long and the journey difficult. He had to cross thirteen rivers, seven oceans, and a hundred mountains before he reached Brindaban.

" 'They told him in the streets of the holy city that it was rumored that Sanatan had not the stone, and Jibana was almost on the verge of giving up the search, but then he said to himself, "I am a man who knows all. Why not go and see that holy charlatan, and unmask his fraud to the people."

" 'That pleased his intellect and spurred him to the river bank where Sanatan lived.

" 'Sanatan that morning was meditating and

communing with God. Jibana could not shake him out of his state into consciousness of the world, so he had to wait until the day was almost ended. When Sanatan finally opened his eyes, he found the man of all-knowledge standing before him.

" ' "What wantest thou of me?" he asked in surprise.

" 'Jibana answered, "O Holy One, it is the touchstone that turns iron into gold that I seek."

" ' "Whence comest thou?" inquired Sanatan.

" ' "From Bengal," said Jibana.

" 'Sanatan smiled. "Such a long and difficult journey—thou deservest to have the stone. Dig in the sand yonder where I hid it when it was given to me."

" ' "Didst thou make no use of it?" asked Jibana.

" 'Sanatan answered, "I left the home of use long ago, and I went out to my Beloved. Go dig that stone out; thou mayest be he who knoweth how to use its magic."

" 'Jibana hastened to the spot. Lo! Hardly had he dug a foot of sand when the jet black stone gleamed out like a light. Jibana took it from its grave and hastily put it against an iron amulet that he wore on his arm. Behold the amulet turned into gold as men become gods in a dream.

He tried it on a bit of iron that he had on his coin string. That, too, turned into gold as men become gods in a dream.

" 'Suddenly, he looked up, raising his eyes from the stone; he saw Santana starting a new meditation and preparing again to plunge his heart and mind into the ineffable unseen. He shouted, "Wait, wait."

" 'Sanatan withdrew his soul from the very threshold of the dark chamber where God abides.

" ' "Please go with thy stone," he said. "My Beloved awaits my coming—I must to the trysting-place. Go, ere yon sun sinks to his rest on the couch of evening!"

" 'Then a strange thing happened. Jibana flung the philosopher's stone into the deep, deep river saying, "I have no need of it."

" ' "Why such conduct, friend?" said Sanatan, still pausing on the threshold of the infinite.

" 'Jibana answered, "Thou who didst find that stone hast but one use for it—to give it burial in the sand. Wherefore? Because thou wouldst search for something more precious still! Why then delude me with a stone, when it is in thy power to reveal to me that which thou seekest?"

" 'So, my son,' Mother concluded, 'Jibana was vouchsafed the Vision of God by Sanatan, the Mohammedan disciple.'

" 'It is a good story, Mother,' I said.

"She answered, 'What wilt thou do if thou dost find the stone that turns iron into gold?'

"That question puzzled me, but, before I could formulate an answer, she spoke again.

" 'What we find is but a step to what we cannot find.' Then she added hastily: 'Thine eyes are heavy with sleep. Let the story of the stone perish—sleep, sleep, O infinite!' "

These endless stories were the backbone of my brother's education, which helped to make him the remarkable man he is. I repeat so many of them here in the hope of giving the reader some idea of the constant appeal to the imagination of the individual soul that a wise Hindu woman, like my mother, tries to make in teaching her child. No two of our large family were taught alike. It was an individualistic training, and these stories, some of them apparently so slight, were the means by which our mother presented truth to our young minds. They were the polished mirror in which we learned to read not only our own eager young faces, but, as time went on and we looked deeper, the brooding tender gaze of her who held so patiently the glass for us where it would best catch the light.

"I remember most vividly what Mother told me about the North Star," said my brother, "the

fellow that neither rises nor sets. He used to worry me and so, one day, I asked her why that star called Dhruva never went to bed.

"She answered, 'He needs neither food nor rest. When Dhruva was a child, his father, who was a wicked king, disinherited him from the throne and Dhruva and his mother went away into the wilderness to live.

" 'When Dhruva was about ten he asked his mother who his father was. The queen was loath to tell him of her wicked Lord, but Dhruva insisted, day after day, asking "Who is my father?"

" 'At last the queen told him the story.

" 'Dhruva said, "But mother, I want my throne. And I want thee to rule as the goddess of my palace."

" 'The queen laughed at her son.

" 'But Dhruva was not an ordinary child; he was not to be put off with a jest. So he kept on urging her to tell him how he could get back his throne.

" 'She could not very well ask him to go to war with his own father, so she said, "If thou wilt sit thee down and call upon God without moving till He answers, thou wilt receive back thy throne."

" 'Immediately, Dhruva began to meditate and call on God. Days passed, two months passed,

yet Dhruva never moved, neither ate nor drank. His mother grew frightened, but no mother should come between her child and his God, so she sat idle near him, herself neither eating nor drinking, but praying also to her God.

" 'At last Dhruva's mind and prayers reached God, and God spoke to him in that hieroglyphic of Silence that those who see Him understand, saying, "Why seekest thou, O Dhruva, to win an earthly throne?"

" ' "But it is my mother's honors and my own inheritance that I desire," answered the boy.

" 'God answered, "Nay, Dhruva, an earthly throne is not worthy of thy intent Spirit. From this day on thou shalt rule over my stars in the infinite firmament. Thou shalt be the lodestar to which all stars will pay homage as they dance around thee."

" ' "But my mother?" asked Dhruva.

" 'The Lord answered, "She shall rule above thee invisible to the world. She shall be the lodestar of Immortality. Souls that come to me, after the body dies, shall be guided by her unchanging presence at the threshold of the Inscrutable."

" 'Now thou knowest, my child,' concluded Mother, 'why the polestar is called Dhruva, and why it neither rises nor sets.' "

My brother was a serious child and had never asked Mother foolish questions such as I used to plague her with, but he did remember some funny episodes which resulted from her perpetual kindness.

"She had no moral courage to say 'No!' to Sanyasins (holy men). No matter what the fellow's nature was, if he said that he was a holy man, she would give him food and drink.

"One day," my brother continued, "a yellow-robed rascal came to the house and sat under the shadow of the large *jam* (berry) tree. He wanted nothing, he said, save a pitcher of pure milk to offer to God. Mother hastened indoors, then brought out about a gallon of milk, pouring it into that fellow's abysmal *kamandalu* (pitcher). After obtaining the last drop, he began the long leisurely business of drinking it up himself.

"I said to Mother, 'Look, he does not give it to God. He's filling his own skin.'

"But she made no answer.

"After the beggar had finished it all he rose to go. Then Mother remarked, smiling kindly, 'Is God satisfied? Or wilt thou have some more to drink?'

"The fellow went out like a dog with his tail between his legs.

"A school for giving the dumb the power of

speech was opened about this time near us. Dost thou remember that loafer, the dumb beggar who always had three meals and a bed whenever he came to our house? His eyes were like a cat's, gray and inscrutable.

"Well, when the school opened, Mother sent him thither to recover his speech and the dolt of thirty was taught how to talk at our expense.

"He returned one day after a year's absence, his tongue now wagging faster than the tail on a dog. He said he was in distress, and borrowed fifty rupees.

"He came again and lied more and received ten rupees. Not only that, he went to our different friends, saying that Mother had despatched him in secret to borrow money from them for her own use.

"At last the matter reached its climax. While Father was resting during the recess of the Court, that dumb rascal went to him and said that Mother had sent him to fetch her some money. He cross-examined the villain and found him lying, and thereupon handed the eloquent cheat over to the police.

"When Father came home and told Mother about it, she only said, 'Poor lad. He has not spoken since he was born; he has only begged, so all he knows now is how to ask for money. How

should he not use his tongue to the same end as his dumbness? Please have him released to-morrow; we must not be a party to his imprisonment.'

"Well, he was freed. The last I saw of him he was selling charms to pilgrims on the river bank.

" 'These charms fend off the stroke of plague,' he cried, 'they avert cholera from your door, drown the cry of care, give peace to the love-sick, children to the barren, and health and vigor of sex to the senile. Come to me, the Master Charmer—for a farthing buy a mountain of benediction!'

"When I came home and faced Mother with these facts, she said, 'I was foolish to have sent him to that school that cures dumbness. In the next incarnation he will be born a professor there as a punishment.'

CHAPTER IX

MY BROTHER'S STORY: THE YOUTH

"BUT childhood," my brother continued, "is dew-brief. It passes as a thunderbolt falls. I must not linger over it. I will only add that I was not like thee: I cared for no holy man. The Christian school made no lasting impression upon me; God was far away and good deeds seemed to me as futile as evil. My adolescence brought me to the most horrible experience of my life. Before this it had been a tigér and a snake that had roused my horror, but now it was man and men; and the dumb rascal that I have been describing was the pivot of it all.

"It was a horrible and sordid story. His brother had been a postmaster in a remote village, and one day the English inspector of funds visited it, and on examining the accounts discovered a deficit. The poor postmaster was accused of taking certain money-orders, and was at once apprehended for stealing State property. He ad-

mitted his guilt with alacrity. No doubt he was shielding someone else.

"The truth was that his wife, a girl about twenty, had stolen the money to buy a pair of gold bracelets. At night she had taken the key from under the pillow on which he slept and had gone down to the post-office in the room below.

"Fate intervened as usual. News was brought that the inspecting officer was arriving in that village within an hour, instead of in two days' time, which hitherto had marked the rhythm and leisureliness of his travel.

"He was a new young man, full of energy and desire to distinguish himself. So when he discovered this wretched postmaster to be guilty of theft, he congratulated himself on his own perspicacity, and would not mitigate the harshness of the situation by any kind of concession. No doubt it was fate. Had the old inspector, and not this young fellow fresh from Britain, been faced with the case of theft, he would have had no desire to attract his superior's attention in order to gain rapid promotion, and would surely have let the fellow make up the sum and then resign his position.

"When the postmaster went to prison, the dumb rascal, his brother, who had recovered his speech in the past seven years, was asked to come

and protect his sister-in-law. So he made his home with her, but he spent his time talking of the marvels of Calcutta to the vain, wretched woman. Thou canst conceive how eagerly she listened to his talk. She was in disgrace in her own village: people boycotted her. Everyone—even a Pariah—felt superior to a woman whose deeds had condemned her lord to jail, and as the village grew more and more oppressive to her, she began to dream of Calcutta, not as a place, but as a paradise.

"So, at last, unable to bear her home any longer, she and her brother-in-law took train for the city, she traveling in a woman's compartment, all alone, while he was in the men's compartment, as is usual in our country.

"At a certain station, as the train was pulling out, a drunken European got into her compartment and assaulted her. When the train stopped at the next station, her piercing cries were heard, and she was found lying on the floor, bleeding and sick unto death. The brother-in-law brought her on to Calcutta, and our family helped him to nurse her into recovery.

"The European who had assaulted her was tried on grave charges; but though he was found guilty, he was sentenced only to pay a fine of a hundred rupees. A brown woman's virtue was

worth only that much to the European. From childhood on, I had heard that the same laws that imposed heavy penalties on brown men, touched the European with a feather-light touch. Now it was established as a fact of my experience, which turned the course of my whole life, though I was not aware of it at the time.

"Thus ended my fourteenth birthday. I think that Mother taught thee little after thy initiation at that age, but me she did not cease to instruct. It was nearly three months after on a March night when the fragrance of jasmine dripped with the faintest stirring of the breeze. I had asked her to tell me why man-made laws operated so cruelly for some and so mildly for others.

"It was dark. I could not see her face distinctly, but I felt her long breath; she was inhaling all she could of the fragrance of jasmine.

" 'Answer, Mother,' I persisted.

" 'What answer did thy father make?' she inquired. 'I hear from him that thou hast spoken with him of this.'

" 'Mother, his answer does not please me.'

" 'But what was it?' she asked again.

" 'He said,' I told her at last, 'that a dog cannot kick an elephant, but an elephant can trample on a dog. He said that life is a long vigil of endurance of pain; the best thing a dog can do is to

bay to the moon, as that is the only outlet that remains for his sufferings. I do not like father's fables at all,' I said emphatically.

" 'But when laws are what they are?' she questioned me.

" 'Mother, can we not change them?' I asked.

" 'Yes, but only provided we vow to be as strong and full of endurance as Jatayu and more artful.'

" 'Jatayu!' I exclaimed. 'Why, he was an eagle, Mother!'

" 'Nevertheless, thou must be like him, my son, and also like Sampat, his brother, two in one. I feel sure that thy soul can encompass both the fierce Sampat and the wise Jatayu—two in one and more.'

"Then she told me the story.

" 'In the days of the gods, when only heroes walked the earth, there were also four eagles that roamed and ranged the air, the parents and two children, Jatayu and Sampat.

" 'As the parents grew old, the desire of life first grew faint in the heart of the father bird, and he consented to die in the height of his flight. He hovered so near the sun that he almost flew above the god, when on a sudden, he fell as a stone falls into a deep well. His wings were close against his body, with not even a feather out-

spread to retard the fall. Down, down, down, he dropped and still further down till the hills were passed, then flocks of small birds, then the green-winged jungles, and he disappeared like a little black leaf in the waters of the sea.

" 'The mother, beholding in horror that mysterious fall, cried shrilly to her two sons and called them to their nest in the Himalayas.

" 'When they reached their home that lay in one of the snowy arms of the hills, she dried her tears and bade the children lie still. At sunset the snow-peaks burnt like torches, then all were lost to sight as the stars flung their silence upon the world.

" 'One day, soon after, Sampat, the younger brother, flew toward the sun. The mother eagle cried to the elder to follow with her. They flew at a certain distance below Sampat, so that what she said to Jatayu could not reach the ears of the young Sun-invader above them.

" ' "Jatayu," said the mother, "promise me to guard Sampat after I die—even to the end of thy days. Knowest thou what killed thy father? He did not die a natural death. He was slain in combat by our ancient enemy."

" ' "Who is that enemy, Mother?" asked the startled Jatayu.

" ' "It is the jealous Sun," she answered. "He does not wish anyone to fly higher than himself.

Thy father soared almost above his head, and the god at once plunged into him the fatal arrow of fire." . . . Suddenly she broke off crying. Lo! There is Sampat too close already to the sun. . . . Come down, Sampat. Come down! Wretched boy!"

"'But he listened not; so beating her wings with a last effort she flew above the heedless young eagle. That instant the sun hurled his fatal arrow of fire. It pierced the mother through the heart. Sampat saw her fall suddenly, her blood glittering like a stream of ruby against the face of day.

"'Sampat flew after her, but she fell, wings folded against her body, past Jatayu who was just below her, past flocks of vultures that began to swoop down after her, past the white hills and the palm trees, down into the yellow and green line where the tawny Ganges throws herself into the arms of her sea lover.

"'That night in their nest, hemmed in by sorrow, Jatayu extracted a promise from Sampat. He made the younger brother swear that he would never go near the sun without giving warning of his intention. Then the wise Jatayu meditated all night to aid his parents' souls going to God. At dawn he roused the sleeping Sampat and hastened to put him through his lessons and exercise.

"'Guarding and educating Sampat proved al-

most an impossible task to Jatayu, but he kept his promise to his mother and never failed to serve the little brother's every need. Sampat was a soul of fire and the very self of daring. Hardly had the anniversary of their parents' death passed when he began to plague Jatayu for permission to fly to the sun. As time went on, his requests became more and more frequent, until at last he said to his elder brother:

" 'Thou art jealous of me. Since thou canst not fly to the sun thyself, thou wouldst fain prevent me from trying my wings."

" 'This proved too much for the patient Jatayu, and he said, "To-morrow, then, we shall scale the sun, if thou wilt promise me one thing: first, that I may go with thee."

" 'The next morning, long before the day broke, the brothers jumped off the Gauri-Shankar (Everest), where their nest was, and flew upwards to the abode of Height. The hills very soon shimmered beneath them a floor of white marble, and ere it was daylight the two eagles had scaled the cold precipices of the moon and were mounting the roofs of the high-born stars.

" 'Now the Sun rose, and seeing the eagle brothers already so high, began himself to scale the turquoise spaces, with burning haste and fierce pride. The worlds glowed in gold and

ruddy light. It was ordained that once humbled by another the sun would lose his power to kill. The planet Asta Basu rolled like a small glass ball below the eagle brothers. Others, large stars, swam below them now. Many stars fled, frightened by the fury of the sun. Yet still the eagle brothers rose. By now they passed Brihaspati (Jupiter); they leaped over the Silver Wanderer, the way of milk, and now, now . . . at last Sampat almost reached the hills of noon where the very Sun himself was used to tarry a moment for rest. Jatayu was flying below him.

" 'The angry god flew so fast that he shortened the morning into the wink of an eye. Upwards and upwards ran the sun.

" 'Ere Sampat alighted on the highest height, suddenly, Jatayu saw an arrow of fire piercing the sky. It was close upon them, and Sampat was the nearest to it. With a shriek of anger and a heart full of dismay Jatayu, remembering what his mother had done before, tumbled and turned, and swifter than the telling, spread out a wing that screened his brother from the fiery blow.

" 'Then Jatayu shook and wheeled and fell with a clanging shriek that smote the heavens till they groaned like a cracked brass gong hit by a hammer of steel.

" 'But because he was not taken unaware, as

were his parents, Jatayu escaped a mortal blow. He lost the use of only one wing. By now all further danger was past, for the sun had been beaten: his hot anger mollified by Jatayu's love and sacrifice. Now he was shorn of his power to kill. So he hastened and set.

" 'The world glowed in color as the eagle brothers swept downwards and still further down, until the Himalayas that once appeared like hives of golden bees, now seemed to poise on space as golden falcons on the wrist of Heaven. Far flocks of vultures that once swarmed below like hungry black flies, now flew crimson-winged with amber feet and ruby beaks. Further down, further yet, the eagle brothers swooped. Even here, though low their flight, the far forests crawled beneath them as green reptiles on their bellies, close to earth.

" 'Now above Gauri-Shankar gleamed, vast and vibrant with light, larger than the sky itself, the lower peaks and the forests no longer mean reptiles, rose like Titans brandishing their spears. Lower yet, lower, till men and cattle that from their heights they had never beheld now beset them on every side.

" 'Oh, to have been cast so low! Those who once dwelt on the crest of Himalay, now sought shelter where the foxes wander and the jackals

shriek at night. But they were happy in themselves; for they had robbed the sun of his insolence.

" 'At last, Jatayu fell upon the Ganges' bank, and plunged his burning body in her cooling stream. Soon the sun-colors faded from the world, the forests throbbed with silences, while the stars rose and flung blackness abroad.'

"I asked Mother to explain the meaning of that story. She made no answer, yet the answer came after she died. But though I did not fully understand it at the time, it made a profound impression on my soul. I learnt and memorized it, and it helped to implant rather than uproot the desire that was beginning to formulate in my mind—to right the wrongs of my own people. I would scale the heights, Jatayu and Sampat, both in one.

"It was at this time that I met a great Christian. He was an Englishman representing one of the large English University missions.

"One day when I was coming home from college by way of the Upper Circular Road, I saw Chichester, who spoke to me for the first time. He was walking up and down on the sidewalk in front of his mission building, a very tall, blue-eyed, light-haired man, with a skin which the eleven years he had spent under the Indian sun had ripened into a florid cherry color.

"When I came upon him walking about in his black gown that afternoon, I felt a strange sensation of mingled trust and dislike: I disliked the foreigner in him, but I could not help trusting that face, innocent as a child's.

"He said to me, 'Brother, will you not have speech with me?'

"His Bengali was as good as ours—both accent and idiom perfect. This was the first time I had heard an Englishman speaking our language without torturing it. They generally hurl it at us as if the words were pebbles for bursting our eardrums. But Chichester's excellently spoken Bengali phrases made me halt.

" 'Pardon my insufficient command of Bengali, Brother,' he said, 'but I wish to have speech with you. If you have an hour to fling away, then come to my quarters; there let us think and speak of the God of Love.'

" 'Here is Bengali with a tang in it,' I said to myself. Then to Chichester, 'An hour to talk on the Eternal is too short.'

" 'Aye, friend. But an hour is the child of eternity. We who wait upon the parent may not neglect the offspring,' he rejoined.

" 'Well said,' I exclaimed. 'How can I resist speaking with one whose tongue pours wizardry upon my hearing?'

"So he led the way and I followed. We entered the steel gates which closed behind us, wandered through a green garden of late February, just on the verge of blossoming into a riot of colors and perfume. The gray gravel creaked under our feet as we trod the meandering paths. At last we entered a Hindu building—Chichester had not built a horrible European mission; he had taste enough to make a Hindu house to hold his God.

"We went through a small, richly carved doorway and entered a vestibule where already the afternoon had deepened into the evening twilight. A door opened to our right, and Chichester stood there waiting for me to precede him into his study. Its floor was covered with a thick Persian carpet, a very delight of the eye, wrought out in blue and amber-colored patterns. The wainscoting was of exquisitely carved sandal wood done by the old masons of Kashi (Benares).

"There were two chairs near a desk, one of which Chichester occupied, while I reclined on a couch of silver-white pillows in our good Indian style. The two open windows gave on the young garden from which the cold, late February breeze drifted in like the breath of the forest-deeps.

"Now in this darkened room, Chichester looked more friendly than ever. His eyes—

though most blue eyes are cold and treacherous like a cat's—glowed more in sympathy with our Indian sky, warm and immense.

" 'Brother,' he was saying to me, 'the God of Love is at your door. Will you not unbar it to let Him in? Will you keep Him from His own?'

"I said in answer, 'But Jesus is only one of many Gods of Love.'

" 'Nay, brother. He is the One, the Only One!'

" 'He is not a true God of Love, if I understand those other God-purveyors of your religion,' I rejoined.

" 'You mean the other missionaries do not give you the song of Love?'

" 'They obscure the Lover,' I said. 'They smear his face with the tar of judgment. I know your Testaments,' I hastened to assure him. 'I know the Dancer of Joy; even on the Cross he spoke no bitter word. His lips were the very lips of Love, his tongue that of Song, and his voice of True Authority. But I see not how he who so loved could so judge. Jesus taught love, but you, the scatterers of his teachings, preach only the Last Judgment. You say to us who are heathen that if we believe not in your God, on the Day of Judgment we shall be made to suffer. I do not understand such a God. Ultimate Love brooks not the sword-stroke of Final Judgment.'

" 'Well spoken, O Heart of wisdom!' answered Chichester. 'Brother, I preach no judgment, save that judgment with which a man judges himself. The supreme judge is not God, but the scales in a man's own heart.'

" 'That is strange talk,' I said.

" 'It is not strange,' retorted Chichester. 'I wish you to take this New Testament home and read it half an hour a day. When you will have finished it all, come and see me, if your spirit sends you hither.'

"Thus we parted. But though I read the book over again in the manner prescribed by Chichester, yet I retained my old conclusion: Jesus preached love as Buddha did. Then someone else preached the Last Judgment, and to make his preaching acceptable, put the words of judgment into the mouth of Jesus. Jesus was Love: judgment was Judas Iscariot.

"I began this reading of the New Testament in strange company—our mother's. Every evening for half an hour I read it to her. She was an artful soul. No one could ever find out from her how much of the New Testament she really knew. Had she ever heard it before? I think so. Yet she always managed to convey to me that she was as eager to learn the story as if it were totally new to her.

"When I had at last finished the account of the

Crucifixion in the Fourth Gospel, she sobbed slowly and deeply over the fate of Jesus. After a long pause, when she had dried the tears from her eyes with the end of her sari, she said, 'Our creed is right; God has paved other roads for other races to walk on till they reach Him. This Man was an Avatar—an incarnation of God, as Buddha and Krishna.'

" 'What if I became a Christian, Mother?' I said.

"Without any hesitation, she replied gently, 'Jesus is a servant as is Krishna; it does not matter which servant shows thee into his Master's Presence.'

" 'Mother,' I asked, with fervor and anxiety, 'wouldst thou also become a Christian, and enter the house of Christ?'

"She looked at me quizzically for a moment, then replied, 'No. I live His teachings, which are the same as our Teacher's.'

"I told Chichester of our mother's impression of Christianity, and he was eager to see her. But Mother would not hear of it. She said:

" 'A woman's place is on the floor of her kitchen or in the chapel of her home. If this young foreigner's mother is in India, bring her to see me. I can gauge his soul by looking into her eyes once. Much seeing and examining is a

modern pestilence. I am too old and seasoned to catch this plague.'

"My last meeting with Chichester was in October, 1914, when he was leaving India. He was going home to die of consumption, which he had developed in Calcutta. As he stood on the deck of the ship that day, white as paper and stooped, he coughed now and then with a horrible hollow sound.

"The Ganges was as clear as a bird's eye; it was long after the rains, so the low tide brought no mud from the up-country. The dusty autumn air was full of melancholy and foreboding. The coolies, bare to the loins, panted up to the cabins, doubled under the weight of the trunks that they were carrying. On a serene corner of the deck, far away from everyone, we embraced and said good-bye.

"My soul spoke to Chichester. 'I believe the Sword of Indignation will cut the rope of slavery from India's hands and feet. I want you to know that before you go.'

"He smiled, then made a sign of silence. After a deep, questioning look at me, he said, 'I have felt it in you all along. I am a Briton; I understand the love of freedom. Farewell.'

" 'Farewell!' I returned. 'You understand, but

your brothers do not. I love you so that to conceal my intention from you would be a sin.'

" 'Farewell,' he said again. 'Let me pray for you to my God, may I?'

"Tears came to my eyes as I consented.

"The bell rang; visitors were going ashore. I turned abruptly away, to hide from my brother the pang I felt at losing him.

"Chichester believed that a man can have salvation by grace. In our religion Karma is greater than Divine Grace; it is the sum total of good or bad infections that a man's soul suffers through living. Blessed is he who lives above good and evil!

"I took this matter to Mother for discussion.

" 'Do we believe sufficiently in salvation by grace in our religion?' I asked her.

"Her answer was to ask of me if I would go on a pilgrimage to Tarakeswar with her the next new moon. 'I can explain the matter to thee there,' she said.

"So when the rim of the moon became silvery in the sky, we went to Tarakeswar.

"On our arrival, the priest-guides fell, like vultures, upon us. We gave our names and the name of our ancestor who founded our family eleven hundred years ago, and this had an electric effect and drove most of them away. For in every place

of pilgrimage there are these clans of Pandas, as they are called, who for generations have kept a genealogy of the families that they pilot through the sacred places. The moment you arrive, you give your full name and the names of some of your ancestors, and also the name of the founder of your family of guide-priests, and the present descendant of your Panda steps out of the crowd of vultures and takes charge of you. He will fleece you like any other guide, but with this difference: he will take good care of you in the traditional way. He must live up to the merit of his ancestors, and he will take you through the holy of holies and explain a symbolism whose inward significance escapes all foreigners, which is better than Thomas Cook's guidance. It is extraordinary that our system is both so ancient and so efficient.

"We followed our ancestral Panda through all kinds of lanes and gullies where beggars sprawled on both sides asking for alms. It was amusing to hear them cease lamenting their poor lot the moment they got something from us, when they sat up and chatted with each other like members of a big club. It amused me very much.

"We reached the Panda's house at about eleven in the morning. His widowed mother and his wife received us with great cordiality.

"After we had washed and bathed ourselves, we sat down to our midday meal. We were served with the very best. Afterwards, my mother and I retired to our room. During the siesta my mother warned me not to accept everything that the guides gave us as relics.

" 'Every relic thou takest,' she said, 'will be put on the bill; thy father will not like that at all. They make money by selling authentic antiques that their carpenter makes by the bushel every day.'

" 'So a place of pilgrimage is one false thing after another!' I exclaimed in disgust.

" 'Oh, no,' Mother remarked; 'religion is a business, like thy father's law practice. In everything the innocent must pay for the wicked, whether it is the King's law, or the priest's God-business. I myself prefer those who cheat me in the name of God; they are at least reminding me that He exists.'

"About four in the afternoon, we went to visit the holy of holies. At first we had to go through outer temples—vast white corridors of concrete, high, vaulted, supported by thick columns. Here all kinds of people were lying on the brown floor, perfectly motionless. They lay like flies, with upturned faces, and between them, snaked a narrow brown path toward the inner shrine which looked

miles away. When we reached it at the end of that face-strewn path, we found ourselves before a small, empty room, railed in with gold, whose four corners had four lamps full of melted butter and wicks of cotton. The wick was thick as my thumb. Each one of those lamps burnt with steady flame.

"Inside the golden enclosure lay a pile of flowers. There was nothing else. I raised my head and looked up at the ceiling—it was full of sculpture: stone lotuses of white and gray, wrought for thirty feet around and above me. I felt as if a river of lotuses was lifted up in the air and held over our heads, by the artifice of a God.

"We spent a month in this place of pilgrimage. In that time I learned what divine grace meant.

"All those hundreds of faces like an endless eruption lying in that corridor—what were they? Who were they? Men and women who had sinned, who had committed crimes or suffered from some fierce disease. Day and night they fasted for the remission of sin or the cure of bodily ills. I saw the same faces every day. They lay there inert, silent, speechless, eyes closed tight, with no sign of life in them save their breathing. This looked like the business of God in grim earnest! People walked by, dust of the street blown by the wind fell upon them; some-

times by mistake we pilgrims stepped on them, yet they lay there oblivious of all things save one—the need of God's grace.

"One felt lifted by a thousand wings of joy when suddenly, out of that honeycomb of faces, rose one with shining eyes—redeemed and made whole. He would arise, take a bath in the lake, offer whatever he wanted to the beggars and then go home, aglow with a revelation entirely his own. Such men and women wore a nimbus to my eyes.

"I talked to some of them. Those who had their deeper troubles stilled, never answered. But those who were healed from sickness would tell one all about it. One of them said, 'I suffered from ulcer of the stomach. Nothing could cure me. Doctors wanted to cut me up, but I was no sheep to be butchered, and I came here the last full moon and lay down to be either healed or killed by fasting and prayer. Oh, the ache of hunger that battled with the pang of disease, until the ache vaulted above the pang. The disease racked me with the old, old agony, but the hunger at least added a novelty to it. I felt better. A new pain diverts one.

" 'Then the new pain grew to be old and familiar, and in order to forget it, I prayed intensely to God. The more I prayed, the more I forgot my woe. And if I slackened in my pray-

ing, the scorpion of hunger stung me more fiercely. So I shut myself up within my prayer. To God there is no time: pray, pray, pray—till you sink into the liquid darkness of it. In a black hole beset with cobras, silent and watchful with lidless eyes, you lie. Suddenly, like a meteor, falls a light. I saw that light widen, grow larger until it spread into a silver stream, where on the bank of it grew bananas yellow as the full moon at its dawning. Then light, more light beat upon me till, unable to bear the horrible abundance of it, I opened my outer eyes and beheld the world again.

" 'It was midday when I was cured. But I lay there on that floor too joyous to move. Now I have bought and eaten bananas; yes, those bananas of my revelation are the fruits that I must eat as a testimony to my healing. But it is not only the stomach that is healed: even the belly of my soul is cured also of any ache or ailment.'

CHAPTER X

MY BROTHER'S STORY: THE SWORD

"IN 1909, after thy departure for Japan and America," went on my brother, "came my years of medical studies. I will omit an account of them as they were entirely uneventful. I traveled very little, and studied a great deal, for I believed that the knowledge of medicine would be the best means I could acquire of serving my people.

"Soon after thy leave-taking, Mother fell ill, and a time came later when she refused to be cured. One day she said quietly, 'I must go. My summons has come.' I never left her bedside during the last three days; at the end she said, 'I could not stay keeping thee engrossed in me and in my welfare. I take no bondage, nor give any. Thou hast thy goal. I leave thee thy freedom.'

"We took the imprint of her foot for each of her children. Thou didst receive thine in America?" he asked.

"I have it with me," I said. It is the custom in India to make a print of the foot of the dead—a sacred relic for the children.

"How did she know," resumed my brother, "that the freedom of my country had become the sole dream and occupation of my mind since 1904, when the girl of whom I told thee had been assaulted? That was five years before Gandhi came back to India from South Africa, where he had tried out his philosophy: 'Soul-force alone can overcome sword-force.' But I knew no more of Gandhi then than of the land of Magic.

"After Mother's death, I began to study the political movements more and more closely, and I traveled throughout all India, studying the people. I found that every peasant believed the English must go. And why? Because they said the English had abandoned righteousness. It was an amazing revelation.

"What a country! All the thousands of peasants' huts that I visited were not huts but shrines of God. Each home had its worship and evensong. Each man believed beyond argument that his soul was immortal. And one and all held that the new Avatar of the Kingdom of Righteousness was impending.

" 'Why not suffer injustice and oppression a little longer? God will be here soon,' was the

universal rejoinder to my complaints and inquiries. God was the beginning, the middle, and the end of all their talk.

"It was then that I realized that the knowledge of medicine was not enough—the science of the body was nothing without the Science of the Spirit, and I must purify myself, body and mind, before trying to purify politics or influence my countrymen. It was then that I first began to practice the ancient ritual of holiness—prolonged periods of fast and meditation, which during all the hazardous years to follow I never relaxed. Unless one is holy, one cannot move India. I had learned that at least from my travels. I fasted three days and meditated seventy-two hours without food, drink, and sleep every month."

I interrupted to ask him how he had learned to meditate.

"Was I not initiated? Did I not inherit meditation with every drop of my blood? Even the leaves and the blades of grass of this, our homeland, are born with meditation in every fiber of them.

"However, difficulties did present themselves. At first, it was difficult to distinguish experiences that were hallucinations from those that were real. But that was overcome in time, for the unreal mystic experience gives power and the temptation

to use it, while the real is above any sense of power. Hallucinations are rooted somewhat in a degree of fact; for instance, one can see and talk to the dead. That is a sort of fact; it deceives many people. On the contrary, true experiences are never kindred to such facts for death is a hallucination, and talking to the dead is hallucination added to indulgence in the sense of power; it is not selfless."

"Then," I ventured, "the real is above self, above power, and above all that we call life and death?"

"The real," my brother explained, "is as it were the sum total and yet more, of all experience. Life and death, rebirth, and more, are contained in it. Power is in it too. But all the *expressions* of power have been finished. You are you and not you as well. Even God is God and not God as well. This experience is real. I might say that it is so real that even a statement of it is Maya.

"What is Maya?" said my brother, in answer to my question. "It is only the statement of absolute experience, as sound is only the ever-vanishing statement, or Maya, of Silence. The real is a ceaseless experience; Maya is to cease that experience in order to talk of it.

"When this period of meditation was over, I

plunged into converting armies and large sections of the constabulary into rebels. I had no desire to enlist a few intellectual men. I wanted the masses.

"The finer religion is, the better it can hold India. So I had to meditate more and more deeply. At last, about the end of 1913, I had my experience of God. It lasted two months." . . . I would have liked to interrupt again here to beg for the essence of that revelation, but my brother silenced me with a gesture. "I must finish the story," he said; as he went on with it, his voice changed. He was no longer a dreamer searching in the soft shadows of his spirit for memories of our mother and his youth. Now I saw before me the man who for six years had led militant revolution.

"Before 1914 we succeeded in disturbing the equilibrium of the government, but after the War broke out everybody in India offered to help the Government. There were thousands of volunteers to the Army. But Reginald Craddock said, 'We cannot accept. We will take 90,000 mercenaries of pre-war status, but if we take volunteers, they will later on claim equality with the British, and the color line on which our Government in India is based will be destroyed.' Lord Hardinge and many other officials were very sym-

pathetically inclined to our offer, but Craddock succeeded in winning them over to his view, so putting another coating of disgrace upon our conquered race. We offered all; they took nothing, and that statement of our humiliation decided us to precipitate the revolution. Then extraordinary powers were given to the police, who called us anarchists in order to prejudice us forever in the eyes of the world, and published broadcast that we wanted to bring the Germans to India, than which there is no more degrading lie. Had they searched the hearts of hundreds of rebels, they would have found there only one sentence carved like letters in a stone: 'No more foreigners. No change of masters; we will be the masters in our own country.'

"Dost thou remember Jyotin, our cousin—he that once killed a leopard with a dagger, putting his left elbow in the leopard's mouth and with his right hand thrusting the knife through the brute's eye deep into its brain? He was a very great man and our first leader. He could think of God ten days at a stretch, but he was doomed when the Government found out that he was our head. The police surrounded him in a jungle and killed him and his men in a pitched battle.

"Then in 1915 the leadership of the flock fell to my lot. Now Mother's story of the eagle

brothers came true. I had to play the elder eagle to the best of my ability.

"I shall not tell all the long story. I shall not tell of the grim and heart-breaking sufferings we endured for months at a time, but the tale of a few encounters I had with the Secret Service may give thee a hint—very little, probably—of how difficult and dangerous our life was for five years."

"How didst thou endure such things?" I asked in amazement, looking at my brother's fine and sensitive face.

"I am always quiet," he replied smiling. "I merely sit still like a mast upon a ship." It was true. I had never seen him excited or heard it said of him by others that he had lost his calm.

"The police at that time knew nothing about me. But somehow they got wind of my leadership. Since they had never seen me, and there was no photograph of me extant, when they came to arrest me I was able to escape and in rather a curious way. At that time my uncle and I were living opposite each other in Calcutta. His house was on the south side of the street and mine on the north. The police came to the latter to search for me and I met them at the door, saying, 'I think the man you want stepped across the way. I will go and call him.'

"So I went over, entered the other house, and went out the back door into a neighbor's, and then again into another house till I was out of reach and in a lane that led to the main road to the police station. I was wise enough to know that all the streets would be filled with plain-clothes men except that one. It was never well guarded. I went on and on.

"That evening I sent out news to all the workers. By midnight we held a conference at our headquarters, in which it was decided it would be safer to remain in Calcutta than to attempt an escape at a moment when every exit from the city would be guarded. I gave instructions that all who had a price on their heads must hide in town, but that those who were not suspected should go about their usual business, keeping a keen eye on what might happen.

"At this time we could not trust written despatches, even in cipher; we had to find men with good memories, to whom we taught long despatches thoroughly before we sent them on to different centers that awaited instructions. But the Government had wind of this, and the police resorted to torturing abominably those whom they captured. They practised it in great secret, and all we knew was that a man with a despatch in his memory would disappear; nothing more.

"One evening, about five days after the disappearance of one of these messengers, I sat down to meditate. It was the second day of my monthly fast, which I always observed with regularity. But on this occasion, my spirit would not move. I tried again and again in vain. Suddenly, before my mind rose the face of the despatch bearer. His eyes protruded like two black marbles, his face was bloated like a wine cask, his tongue was hanging out of his mouth, not only bloodless, but blue, and there was a hole in the middle of it. The rest of the man hung in mid-air; his hands tied behind him and his legs drawn in almost doubled up in pain.

"I came out of this horrible experience and ordered a meeting. It took all night to reach my Cabinet. When we were assembled my Minister of Foreign Affairs recounted a dream that he too had had that night. It agreed with what my meditation had revealed to me.

"After deliberations, we decided to give up Calcutta as a base and go into hiding in the suburbs for a while. That decision was hastened by the police, for the following night our place was raided, and we had a narrow escape across the roofs of neighboring houses in the dark.

"This was the moment when Germany began to show her hand in Asia. We had been foment-

ing and creating a rebellious spirit in India since 1897—forty years after the Mutiny—then suddenly came the Germans in 1914 to exploit it for their own benefit. They knew nothing about us; we did not wish external help; we were convinced that India, if she were to rise, must do so by her own inner resources.

"Canst thou imagine," asked my brother not without bitterness, "that an Oriental would be fool enough to trust William, the Kaiser? Ever since the brutal days of the Boxer Rebellion every Asiatic was taught that the Germans were enemies of Asia. The Hohenzollerns time and again preached to the world that the white man was ordained by God to rule the brown, the yellow, and the black. All his days William, the Kaiser, warned mankind against the Yellow peril and the Asiatic menace, but now that he was sinking in a quicksand, he looked to us to fish him out of it.

"I refused to have anything to do with such unprincipled people. They believe in the white man's supremacy, but in the time of trouble they ask aid even of Negroes. We, inside the boundaries of India, knew that all was ready; we needed no outside help. It seemed in a week or ten days that the whole country would rise as the Ganges rises in flood-tide. We were expecting

rifles and machine guns on a ship from the Pacific Ocean, all of which had been bought for us by an Indian. It was a question of days when it would leave a little island in the Pacific and reach an uncharted Indian port unknown to the British.

"Just then, a fellow from America, a Hindu whom the Germans had bribed, was caught in Hongkong. He was sent by them to find out who were the Indian rebels, and to offer them help. This fellow at the slightest show of torture, told the British all his purpose.

"Of course, our men in Hongkong at once took to cover and sent a wire to the papers in India with these words: 'Indian Leader Captured; German Help Nipped in the Bud.' It was the only way they could flash the message to us, since all the cables were under British control. After seeing these words (which the censor was glad to let in for the publicity value in them), a child could predict that the British Navy would lock all the Pacific sea-gates to India.

"The following fortnight, whenever I sat down to commune with God, I saw only one thing: a slate-colored ship with a black smoke-stack breasting waves mountain-high. I could infer the rest. O those Germans!

"At once I sent forth commands to strike no blow at the strategic places previously decided

upon. Without at least eight thousand rifles and three hundred machine guns, the first match could not even be lighted, much less an empire set ablaze, even though the majority of the people were ready."

"What became of that ship?" I asked him.

"All I know is that she lies now in the bottom of the ocean; and with it our hope," he answered.

"But to return to my story. We had decided, as I have said, to move our headquarters from Calcutta, and we had chosen for our base a house across the river, one of the many pleasure gardens that rich men keep there; but before long our new hiding place was also discovered, and this time our escape was as narrow as walking on the edge of a razor. There were eight of us, two women and six men, my principal advisors. We had made friends with the neighborhood and everything looked secure, friendly and safe. As in every household there must be a priest, one of us dressed as the Brahmin.

"Two of our six men kept watch on the roof day and night, taking turns at sentry duty for eight hours in twenty-four.

"One morning about half-past four, I was roused from sleep by the priest. He said to me, 'I have just now returned from the river—there are enemies about.'

"I at once gave orders to rouse the house very quietly. I said, 'All must be ready for flight inside of ten minutes.'

"I did not have to go to the roof to take a look. Through the window of my room I saw a white shape standing under a mango tree in the neighboring garden; then under another tree, I beheld a black turban, which proved a policeman's red one seen in the very faint light of dawn.

"The priest returned, saying that all were ready save the men on the roof, but I heard them coming down softly as a rope drawn over a bare rock. They had just then caught a glimpse of another turban under another tree in a neighbor's garden. I sent them downstairs to reconnoiter. In the meantime, I watched from my window. As the daylight grew bright, from under the mango tree emerged Dunscombe, the head of the C. I. D., as the Secret Service is called in India (Criminal Investigation Department).

"He drew his revolver, then went forth to enter the neighbor's villa. Good! He had mistaken it for ours, which would give us a few minutes' start. I told the two women to escape first. They were dressed as beggars on a pilgrimage, in their bundles they had all our valuable papers. I posted the priest at the window and went to the cupboard to get out my own disguise of a bazaar servant.

"We decided to disperse in different directions, the priest and I going last, and together.

"The entire countryside was full of plain-clothes men. They were watching for us at every turn of the road. The priest and I went to the bathing Ghauts. On the way we quarreled loudly, literally hiding ourselves under our own noise. I cried, "Your reverence knows that I am a man of my word: I'd no more think of selling you half a pound less than the exact weight than I'd kill a sacred cow! Rather have the bolt of Heaven smite my only son than bargain with your reverence!'

"The priest replied, 'I shall go across with thee to thy shop and inspect with my own eyes. The potatoes are for the feast of the eighth moon. Hundreds will come to my temple that day; among them the high and the holy, too. Hasten, thou slave of desire. Hasten, O costermonger of many wiles.'

"Thus we passed six men of the secret service —stationed within fifteen yards of one another. When we reached the river bank we found two more at the Ghaut.

"The priest shouted at me, 'I have a great mind not to go with thee. I shall cancel the order on the spot. To think that a man who reads sacred books and serves the community has to quarrel and bargain with a low-born trader.

This is an iniquitous age! There is no respect and love of Brahmins any more. I shall put a curse upon thee!'

"'No, no, my Lord!' I kept it up, falling on my knees. 'I swear that there is no more profit in it for me than one-half of one per cent. That is all. I am selling these vegetables cheap to you in order to acquire merit. O holy one, O incarnation of Truth—do not curse me! I beg of you; with the grass between my teeth, like a buffalo, I beg of you.'

"The priest shouted, 'Ho, boatman, take us across to the other Ghaut—what sayest thou, boatman, four copper pieces per head? Curses on curses; is that the way to cheat thy priest?'

"The boatman cried, 'Don't curse, my Lord. I am too poor to bear a curse. Get on, your holiness—pay what you like, but for the Love of God, don't curse me.'

"The priest grumbled and grunted with satisfaction, talking of his Gods, of cows, and of holiness as he got on the boat. I followed his example, still shouting, 'Behold a poor trader, behold the age of poverty we live in! The world is full of sin; no one gets a meal any more that can stretch his belly to satisfaction. Your reverence—have mercy on me.'

"'Hush, fool!' shouted the priest. To the

boatman, he commanded, 'Hasten, O sire of snails! The sun is hot. Hasten, idle limbs and lazy heart!'

"Once in the middle of the river, we spoke to each other with our fingers about what we ought to do, and with our voices we discussed the nature and price of potatoes and beans.

"On arriving on the other shore, we found that there was only one plain-clothes man stationed at the Ghaut. We paid the boatman after a long drawn-out quarrel, then started a new wrangle between ourselves. The plain-clothes man scrutinized us and listened to our quarrel carefully, but convinced by our clamor that we were of no consequence, he lighted a cigarette and called to the boatman to take him across. We kept up our quarreling and bargaining until they had rowed quite a distance, then we went on our way, but very slowly and still cursing each other as vociferously as ever.

"After diving and ducking into a good many lanes, we reached our destination, about two miles from the landing place on the river bank. Here we changed our dress into that of gentlemen of leisure. In two months I had grown a beard and now that I looked like a royal roué, I felt safe, for the police knew certainly that all the men and women in our ranks were austere puritans

and sworn celibates. It was a wonderful disguise, for to their mind a voluptuary would be the last person to believe in nationalism, and they were right in this assumption.

"Again we went back to the river, a mile further south and recrossed it. We took a taxi, and as befitted our appearance, drove very slowly about, taking the air.

"Suddenly, we saw from the opposite direction, going toward Calcutta, a car, driven at moderate speed. In it we recognized Dunscombe, the head of the C. I. D., and four policemen. As they passed us, Dunscombe shot a glance at our faces, apparently convinced that we were that we appeared to be. All this happened in a flash.

"But we drove on leisurely. Hardly had we gone a couple of miles, when one plain-clothes man stopped the taxi and tried to seat himself next to the chauffeur, saying:

"I am on urgent business. A friend of mine is dying; won't you drive me to Serampur as fast as possible?'

"I ordered him to get off. 'I would not drive even myself there, were it my own father who was dying now.'

" 'But my dear sir, my most intimate friend—this is the only taxi that I have seen so far,' he expostulated.

"I said with a leer, 'I am going to loiter here

until the bird of pleasure flits out of her cage. Be gone. Don't be a killjoy.'

"The henchman of the law was convinced that we were a pair of wasters. So he let us pass. After we had gone quite a distance, I bade the driver turn around and go to Calcutta very fast. We pulled down the shades of the car so that the secret service man would imagine that we had a woman with us.

"Once in the crowded streets of Calcutta we were safe. It was about five o'clock in the afternoon; the rush of traffic swallowed us out of all recognition.

"After sundown we reached our destination—a house just behind the police station of Nimtala. The old saw, that the darkness is thickest under the candlestick, is quite true.

"My Cabinet rejoined us there. They had brought with them a man from Russia, one of our own, who informed me that the Russians were going to have a revolution, and that the Ameer of Afghanistan had been assassinated some time ago, though the censor had not allowed the news to pass.

"We thereupon discussed the possibility of obtaining help from the Afghans, wrangling over the point nearly two hours. But all the while I stood at the window to keep watch.

"Suddenly, I saw a man across the street look-

ing for a house number. He kept at it for what seemed an infinite time; then he turned swiftly and glanced at our house and turned back to look for the number.

"I hastened to the wooden council couch—not a council table—where they were still wrangling, and I said, 'If India is to have freedom, the arms and ammunition must come from without. I shall go to Afghanistan myself and bring them across the frontier. In the meantime, do you disperse. I shall resume communication with you when the time comes.' I pointed to the window. 'A man yonder is watching us. This house will be raided to-night. Ready! Each go his own way,' I ended. It was enough.

"I left all the lights burning in different rooms —exactly as they were. Once downstairs, we went out one by one. I was the last to leave.

"Hardly had I gone into the street when shots were fired. So I shot at and put out the only electric lamp in our lane. In the dark, footsteps were heard in many directions. Then a bullet whistled by—someone fell. I pressed close to the wall and kept moving toward the mouth of the lane. In the meantime, bullets flew at me from all directions, and one lodged in the calf of my leg.

"I half-limped and half-ran through winding

alleyways until at last I found myself in a well-lighted street. My leg was bleeding profusely. I entered the nearest house, and went straight up the dimly lighted stairs, bursting suddenly into a room where a woman was eating her solitary supper.

"She rose to her feet and looked at me. Lo! to my utter amazement I saw my cousin Kusum.

"No wonder thou art amazed." My brother laughed at my expression, which must have been a study, for our cousin's husband was a member of the service, a terrible C. I. D.!

"Kusum exclaimed, 'What dost thou here? Thou with a price upon thy head?'

" 'I stumbled here unknowing,' I said. 'I am wounded, perhaps going to die,' and I sank exhausted to the floor.

"When I opened my eyes again, I found myself in bed, and Kusum's husband in the uniform of a higher police officer looking at me.

"We gazed at each other an infinite time. At last the pain in my leg drove me to speak.

" 'I am worth a few thousands, dead or alive. Get the doctor to put an end to me.'

" 'Thou art safe,' he said simply. 'The doctor has been here. Thou wilt live.'

" 'Live to be hanged!' I exclaimed.

" 'Nay, cousin,' he replied, 'it was to my home

—not my office—that thou didst come. As my guest thou art safe. All guests are sacred.'

"That fellow was an old-fashioned Hindu as we are—and to him a guest was holy and above law. He proceeded to hand me his revolver, bidding me keep it and use it upon himself and his family, if I feared betrayal.

"He and his wife nursed me nearly three weeks. A policeman's house is the safest hiding place in the world.

"As soon as I recovered, he told me that the avenues of escape were closed to me, enumerating them all, but I noticed that there was one road he did not mention. He was a thorough Hindu, and that was the road I took out of Calcutta; for mile after mile it was unguarded!

"At this time I was disguised as a Bairagi, a mendicant holy man with two yards of cloth, a Kamandalu and a trident—six rupees in all!

"I walked and walked, day in and day out, speaking only pure Hindusthani." (My brother could speak many Indian dialects.) "No one could suspect me of being a Bengali.

"At Baidnath I took the fire-chariot. When we reached the Moghulsarai railway station where we had to change trains, my heart almost leaped out of my breast when I recognized a plain-clothes man disguised as a ticket collector. Every-

one had to show him a ticket and thus everyone who went in or out of a train was observed by him, so, taking one chance in a thousand, and trying my best to look like a holy idiot, I went forward and asked him, 'Am I right to own this ticket, O Sahib? Is it a male or a female ticket? Have I transgressed?'

"The fellow was so disgusted at my stupidity that he said, 'O thou imbecile, thicker than an elephant, dost thou not know that tickets have no sex? Go hence!'

"I wailed to him, 'Fountain of Knowledge, how am I to know this thing? Both men and women travel; I have not thy book-learning, and I said to myself there are male and female tickets, as there are male and female babies.'

" 'Can such fools as thou art teach religion? God!—what a creed!' With that he shoved me into a crowd of pilgrims. By his exclamation I knew him for a Moslem.

"By the time our train reached Benares I felt beyond danger of detection.

"In the course of several months, news reached me that America had entered the War some time ago, and also that the Russian Revolution had become an accomplished fact.

"Though the events I have described happened in succession, yet the time in between them was

long. Exactly three months passed between my being shot in the leg and my reaching the holy city.

"It was then that I met the Blessed One—whom we have just visited—the first holy man who ever spoke to my soul. One day I was sitting at the step of a shrine beyond the Thirty-six Melodies—thou rememberest the place? I do not know how long I had remained in meditation that afternoon at the little brown temple, when a voice within me said, 'Look over thy shoulder and find the Face that is thy quest.'

"I did as I was bidden from within and—behold!—the Blessed One was standing behind me with closed eyes, his face like a mirror in which shone the Face.

"He, too, was communing with God. After a while he opened his eyes, still shining with the white light of his meditation. We gazed at one another for a space. Then he said, 'Thou art past all phantoms that pursue. The trial is over. Come to thy home!'

"I obeyed his command. We went to the Rajah's garden where the Rajah keeps his peacocks. The Holy One signed me to sit down under a tree with him. He took my hand and began to meditate. I followed him.

"Yes, it was clear. No more phantoms pur-

sued me. No more the battle of good and evil. He and I flew like the eagle-brothers beyond and above the sun, far, far away. Then . . . then, the heart in me broke and doubt was torn to shreds. Through the tearing of the veil of doubt, I saw and heard; sight was heard, hearing was seen. . . . Silence and Light. And in that circle of identity the dance of the worlds—Om, Om! Om is the flavor, the aroma that I breathed. It is the odor of 'That.'

"When we rose to go to the Holy One's monastery, it was already starry night; eight hours had passed since I had sat down with him under the tree in the Rajah's garden. I knew then certainly that the end had come, and that India's freedom was not to be reached now and by me, but I had many a long journey ahead of me, many an arduous and anxious day before the affairs of my party could be settled, and safety secured to my followers. The battle was not won except in my own spirit.

"It is a long, long story. But for thee I may abbreviate."

CHAPTER XI

MY BROTHER'S STORY: THE ESCAPE

"FROM Benares, I went disguised as a trader through all of northern India, for a price was still upon my head. I passed Lucknow with its rococo beauty, Allahabad, Mathura, Agra, Delhi. I saw the works of art in every place, lingering everywhere as long as I wished.

"In Agra at night I beheld the Taj Mahal; it was stone turned into a dream. It was the face of man's Love abiding for an instant between the rise and the fall of a sword. O Shah Jahan . . . what a dream; a sorrow become perfect, and a sigh become fixed!

"From Delhi, I went south toward Jhansi. From Jhansi, I went to Rampur. Even now, despite Manchester goods and their ghastly cheapness, some chudders are still made in the state of Rampur. And it is a delight to see the shawls appraised. If a chudder is coarse in texture the artistic buyer says, 'Ah, my weaver friend,

thou didst not sing the day thou wovest this one . . . look, how coarse it feels.'

"The day a chudder weaver sings at his toil he makes a perfect shawl. The day his song does not quicken in his throat, his product is coarse.

"Again I wandered west and north. But I must tell thee how I saw the cutting of Jahore. What is Jahore in English? It does not matter what it is in English. It is a precious stone. It takes men hours and very often days to cut it till, as they say, 'it betrays the dew in it that gathers and throws out the sun as a flower exudes fragrance.'

"I once asked a jeweler: 'Why not cut quickly, as they cut by machine in far-off lands?'

"He answered, 'The far-off lands cut stones for the market, we cut them for a few Rajahs, who can afford to wait. If it takes a thorny plant months to give a rose, why hasten a hard stone to yield its fragrance of light in a day? It is good to give suck to a stone with one's strength till it glows like one's own blood.'

"What wonderful threads of gold they make, also! They put a piece of gold through a cast with a variety of holes, pulling it through each in turn and finally when it grows longer and longer, and passes the last least hole, they sing, cozening it. . . .

'Thin as a woman's hair
And glowing as a fawn clad with the setting sun.'

"In India they used to make tapestries out of the finest threads of gold as if they were silk. In Lhassa the Dalai Lama has one such tapestry —a rendering of the Wheel of Life. All the figures, including thirteen Buddhas, are as well wrought out as if they had been painted with colors. Think of it—a tapestry about fourteen feet long and six feet broad done with threads of gold soft as silk, hard and perfect as a fresco painting on the rocks of an Ajunta cave!

"But now that art is dead. They can make now only some clever chains, garlands of gold flowers, brooches, and bangles out of those threads of gold—which are the acme of the goldsmith's art in India to-day. With the coming of the Mohammedans, tapestry of gold died in the thirteenth century. They forbade the representation of human figures in any form of art and with the death of the Hindu empire golden tapestry-making died too. Then the Moghuls of the eighteenth century did their best to revive it through patronage, but, alas, they too passed. Now we import glass bangles from the factories of Europe, and tapestries, mostly second-rate,

from France and Italy. Not the very best of them can touch the littlest toe of one of those Buddhas in that golden web of Thibet.

"Sometimes one or two foreign tourists order some cunningly wrought ornaments from our goldsmiths, but unfortunately, what they give with their patronage they take away with the horrible designs which they bring with them and insist on having copied.

"Are not the ivory carvings of Delhi repellent, simply because of the foreign designs that our carvers' souls reject and their hunger-driven hands execute? It is not enough for the Nataraj, God of art; he not only desires the feeling of our hands but the singing joy of our souls.

"Alas, this same thing has happened to our rug-makers. Between Ludhiana, Lahore, Amritsar, and Kasmir, all the rug-makers are working on designs submitted to them by agents of Western shops. It is a shock of surprise to behold the effect of such commercialism on the craftsmen. Some of these fellows have signed contracts to give all their products to an agent of one shop. One look at this smart traveling agent's designs is enough.

"Every old design had its song. 'The design will not blossom right if it receive not the song that is its due.'

"Listen to an old rug-weaver who is too old to weave, but who can sing the songs of his craft. 'Grandfather,' I asked him, 'hast thou taught these songs to the younger weavers?'

" 'When my fingers were nimble, I wove rugs that had to be watered each with its own song,' he answered. 'Now when stiff fingers ache for the touch of work, I sing in order to ease their pain. Why should I teach the young my songs? They weave not my kind of rugs. Why pound a song to death on a stony design?'

"The higher arts and also the lower ones of craftsmanship are not to be saved by the mere giving of food. Not food, but freedom from food is the wing on which art soars to God!

"In another rug-makers' village I found fourteen families at work. They were poorer, but full of life, and singing old songs. I inquired why they sang so well, and as I had expected, the village headman, an old man of eighty, answered me, 'We make the old rugs for the Rajah of Thalum. Our rugs make us sing.'

"The old fellow looked like an aged elephant, with bald, domed head, long nose, shriveled chin, and ears large as a child's palms. He had not a tooth in his head, but his eyes were burning charcoals and his whole body six feet tall, straight as a brass-shod club.

"He said, 'Songs died in most villages when

Dulip Singh, the last King of the Punjab, was banished to England. No one has bought rugs since, as the royal house bought them with sharp scrutiny of the eye and large bounty from the heart. There are a few villages that still sing because there are a few Rajahs yet left who sit on rugs and not in chairs like an ape on a tree. . . legs hanging down. Sovahn Allah, to sit with legs sticking out (instead of doubled under as they should be), how discourteous to guests and friends!'

"The old fellow's eyes blazed as he concluded his harangue: 'The belly of a man burns with emptiness so that he takes any work in order to stuff it and thus he uproots song and laughter from his soul to do any order that is forthcoming. That is the calamity that has fallen upon us weaver-folk. The *tajjab*—the wonder of it, is that men can live without singing at their work. If thou hadst said to me sixty years agone that such a thing would come to pass, I would have broken thy head with the buffeting of my scorn, but it is too true now. I can prophesy that in another score of years the songs of weavers that have lived four score will be lost as if they had never been. Allah Karim . . . come to my house, sir, I shall enjoy giving thee food and drink as well as a feast to the eye with a rug that has served as a model in our family when my grandfather's

father was appointed rug-maker-royal to the Moghul of Delhi.'

"As I moved more and more about where the seventeenth-century India yet lives, I came upon forms of art that I had never seen before. Thank Vishnu for the English Secret Service!

"From the rug-makers' country, I moved south where the people perforate and carve large blocks of marble (sometimes twenty feet square) into screens of exquisite designs. It was a revelation to me that all that marble-work that one sees in the Taj can still be done again in India. The inlaying of semi-precious stones of a vast range of colors into marble goes on now as before, but no Rajah has courage enough to try another Taj Mahal.

"I learned many songs from these workers of the south. They sing beautifully as they toil.

"The secret service drove me northward and I came across Bidri-workers for the first time in my life.

"I tell thee," my brother emphasized, "India is a Universe. Picture to thyself these workers! The Moghuls endowed them beyond all poverty. Until the fourteenth century they worked without money, but after the coming of the Moghul they worked above it."

Since the reader may not know what Bidri is,

I will explain that it is the Indian name for Damascene work. Though inlaying in metal with metal came to India from Damascus, the Indian master-craftsmen achieved an art of inlaying which the Damascene cannot touch. The Indian Bidri-masters use copper, steel, and bronze to marvelous advantage, and it is the employment of these commoner metals, not brass, silver, and gold, that created the Bidri art. They inlay the cheapest metals on one another, or mix them and then inlay so skilfully that, compared with them, most Damascene work looks too ornate.

"This art," my brother went on, "is dying, because since the days of the Moghuls there are few people who care for it. There is no state endowment either, to protect the workers.

"I once asked a Bidri-worker why he was poor.

"He replied, 'Why do wild beasts now walk where once the grand Moghuls loitered in sumptuous ease?'

" 'Hast thou any songs?'

" 'The molten or hard metal would not enter and sit in the harder one if we did not sing to it,' he replied. 'The song that brings the beloved to our side is the same song that quickens a metal to grow into flowing wonders of design. The day our Bidri-masters cease from singing, that day they will lose their art.'

"It was once in dodging the ubiquitous secret service that I entered the house of a Kaowal for the first time in my life. This was in Meerut. I was a vendor of chudders and linen, and I asked to stay the night.

"The Kaowal said, 'I can sing, but I have no money.'

"I said to him, 'Then sing and ravish me of my parsimony.'

"He sang many songs: of Kabir, Mira, Tansen, and many singers and mystics whose names I had never heard. He had a tawny face like a tiger's. He told me the tale of the Kaowals; how their families had been endowed by the Moghuls, so that, untrammeled by poverty, they could purify and preserve the music of India.

"Tales of woe and tales of beauty he told me those two nights and two days I stopped at his house. I gave him six Rampur chudders as a present, but I would have given him sixty-six had it been in my power, for each one of his songs. When I said farewell and embraced the poverty-stricken tiger-man, proud and pure-hearted, he gave me a letter to all the Kaowals of India from Benares to Rawalpindi.

"At last I reached Peshawar. It was March. The cold was severe. During the day the sky opened like a blue lotus, so intense, yet so soft.

Caravans came and went. News was brought that the German offensive, the last of the War, was going to wipe away the Allies.

"In the meantime, I had heard from Afghanistan that the new Government could not spare any arms or ammunition. The same news came from Bokhara and Tashkend. It was more and more evident that India was not to be free, then, at any rate.

"One day in Peshawar, all the Kaowals of the Punjab and Cashmere met for a song contest in the house of a rich merchant.

"They sang the Tiger beauty melody, as the sun went down; then as the night progressed, they sang other songs—each one increasing the ecstasy of the audience. I was in a trance, but nothing is so brief in life as beauty. Suddenly, someone whispered to me under the crescendo of the singing: 'Thou art watched. There is no time to lose. Soon the lights will be extinguished. Make good thine escape! There is a horse without.'

"In a moment the lights went out and in the darkness shots were heard. Swiftly and silently I made my way out and found the horse awaiting me. I leaped on his back, and in a few moments like a god on the wings of speed, I passed village after village, trusting to the instinct of that marvelously trained animal.

"At last I reached a post, one of our own—a villa belonging to a Rajah whose sympathies were anti-British, where six other horsemen met me. They were representatives of six regiments who had been ready to mutiny at any time. They brought the fatal news that a traitor amongst their men had confessed and given away all our plans. The authorities, having learned my whereabouts, had sought to arrest me at the music contest, and not only my hiding place but our programme of country-wide revolution, had been revealed. This was the death-blow to our present hope; the end had indeed come, as I had foreseen in Benares, and that night, within the glistening marble walls of the Rajah's villa, I drew up the plans for disbandment. Those who were with me were to drive post haste in different directions to tell all our followers to show no slightest stir of rebellion anywhere. 'The gate of destiny is closed before us!' was the word.

"The six ringleaders who had met me were determined at all costs to save their regiments, and so decided to give themselves up to the authorities there, and declare all the rest of the army loyal.

"That night I too had to ride fast and far, for before the first flush of the morrow, all of northern India must be informed to play the part of obedience.

"The Rajah's villa was near the military road that connects Peshawar with the rest of the forts and garrisons in upper India. I rode southwards, telling the direction by the stars. I went on and on, and in a short time, the day broke and I entered a long stretch of fields where the first spring grain waved darkly in the grayness of early dawn.

"After fifteen more minutes of hard riding, I arrived at my destination, the house of a friend. I approached the entrance and tapped the proper number of times. Those strange tappings of the revolutionary open doors to him like magic, and I slipped in, telling the servant to bring me to his master.

"He said, 'Dost thou not recognize me, Brother?'

" 'What, disguised as a servant in thine own house, friend!' I exclaimed.

" 'We are all disguised and ready to go forth to die,' he uttered with intense feeling.

"Then he led me to a secret chamber and there I told him all that had happened the previous night in the Rajah's villa. 'It is evident to me,' I concluded, 'that the Government wishes to encourage an abortive uprising in order to have a pretext for crushing us. If we rise now, whatever feeling of freedom there is in the land will be nipped in the bud. The Mutiny in 1857 was

suppressed so remorselessly that no seed of freedom could sprout in India in fifty years.

"'Now make ready for our escape. Before the sun sets to-day we shall be pursued!'

"In an hour we had all left that house—it was easy to do so, for the inmates had been ready for the oncoming revolution. Our plan was carried out successfully. The three women, two children, and two trusted old servants went to the station four miles away where they boarded a train, proceeding to Mathura by a long, tortuous railway journey, while we went on horseback, I posing as a Punjabi doctor and my friend as my servant.

"At last we reached Amritsar—a quiet, loyal Sikh town. There was no more revolution there than in Utopia. Most of the Sikhs were fighting in Flanders and Mesopotamia for the King-Emperor.

"At Amritsar we boarded a train for Mathura. We took a month for the entire journey.

"In Mathura, I set up as a medical practitioner. My friend's family posed as my family, while he himself, now quite securely disguised, held the position of my majordomo. We all lived in the same house. From that time on, we had no trouble.

"The coming of the Americans to France decided all the revolutionists in India to give up the

struggle. By December, 1918, we had quieted the entire country by informing every unit of revolution in unequivocal terms that any outbreak would ruin the country's prospect of freedom for a hundred years to come.

"Then suddenly, in the spring of 1919, General Dyer set fire to India by killing unarmed and loyal Punjab folk. The Amritsar Massacre did what nothing else could have done; it buried Britain's moral and political prestige—a hard-earned thing too—beyond resurrection.

"With the Amritsar massacres, the leadership of India passed out of the hands of groups like ours. For now, the feeling of unrest gripped the masses irrevocably, and Gandhi became the symbol of India. No other man, no other party counted for anything.

"General Dyer did more to kindle a permanent discontent than any man before him. Why? Only the gods can explain. In the history of nations, such strange deeds mark the beginnings of epochs, yet the men who perpetrate them never know what they are doing. Shree Rama Chandra built the bridge on the Indian Ocean with the help of monkeys and squirrels, and Christ entered Jerusalem on an ass. General Dyer was the mouse whose act became as monstrous and significant as the stampeding of all the elephants in a jungle.

"In the meantime, India had given birth to the

saint—Gandhi, who could purify all sins by his presence. From now on, India creeps no more: she flies; and Gandhi is her wings.

"General Dyer did not sin because of circumstances; he sinned in his heart by hating and fearing. All the world knows hate and fear cannot be eliminated by pious deeds. They can be destroyed at the root only—in the soul—by fasting, prayer, and meditation. You may sin against your brother by an act, but you cannot be forgiven by another act, no matter how noble. The law of the soul is such that no matter how external your acts of sin, your purification for them must be through the purgation of your soul; there is no alternative."

CHAPTER XII

MY BROTHER'S STORY: THE SHEATH

"BY the way," went on my brother, with sudden amusement flashing in his quiet eyes, "I forgot to mention an adventure, which was rather exciting, that befell me during that long journey to Mathura. The right-hand man of Dunscombe, an Indian expert of the secret service, and I, traveled on the same train between Nagpur to Jubbalpore. He seemed convinced that I was a holy man, since I wore the disguise of one, but I recognized at once his bullet-shaped, bald head.

"He asked me to look at his palm. With my left hand under my tunic resting on the butt of my revolver, I took his proffered hand in my right. I told him that his life was a great secret, that he was born to be a King, that he was brave enough to face any danger, that he had six children and a fine wife.

"After the palmistry was over, he opened his bag and took out a magnifying glass: all this time his eyes were fixed upon me while I made

believe that I was lost in the intense Inane. 'Surely he must have his suspicions now,' I thought. But my soul from within said, 'He cannot harm thee. Thou art safe.'

"Then he handed me a paper to read. I held it in my two hands and he thrust the magnifying glass between it and my eyes. I had both of my hands out. He could have easily seized my wrists, but he did not. I saw that he was looking at my thumbs and fingers through the glass. I let him examine me, and I thought he was satisfied by his scrutiny that I was not the nationalist refugee from justice whom he sought, but a true holy man, for he began to tell me the story of his life at length and without reserve, asking me if his ambition would be fulfilled.

"I answered, 'The sign of Jupiter grew dim two years ago, no chance now.'

"At that, he slapped his knee and swore at some invisible opponent.

"Then I asked him, 'What is thy religion? Dost thou meditate on God daily?'

"He answered, his sharp eyes half-closed, his bullet-like head inclined a little to the right, 'My religion is to watch for him who sleeps.'

"I said nothing in answer, musing upon our strange race, for a Hindu must have a religious outlook even when he is policing the country.

Mahadeo, what a people! It is not true we have religion; the truth is, religion *has us!*

"But along with these thoughts, my mind still probed into the motives and manner of this Eastern Sherlock Holmes. Did he guess the truth?

" 'If he knows who I am,' I thought, 'why does he not arrest me?' Why? Why? Suddenly, the answer came. 'He does not dare for, by Shiva's bull, he is unarmed! Now all is clear!'

"But I must act, and at once. He and I were the sole occupants of the compartment. It was a dangerous moment, for I was, as thou knowest, still a fugitive with a price upon my head.

"Just then my chance came. With all his astuteness, he evidently did not know that I had recognized him, for he turned his back to me for an instant to look for something in his suitcase.

" 'This is my chance,' the voice told me from within. I aimed a blow on the right spot and knocked him unconscious.

"Now followed the long process of gagging and tying him with the length of his own turban. Then I carried him—a terrific load, for he was a big man—into the lavatory and settled him comfortably. I opened his bundles; but found nothing important and I put them by his side.

"I always carried under my arm, wrapped in a costly silk shawl, a small bundle of bedding which

contained a pair of disguises. The richness of the silk supplied me with the excuse of never trusting the package to a porter, or out of my own hands. I had just succeeded in accomplishing my transformation when the train entered the Jubbalpore station.

"I did not get off at once, and as luck would have it, a horde of third-class passengers, pilgrims mostly, passed my car. Then I opened the door and let myself drop into their onrushing tide that swept toward another train across the platform at the other end. I let the pilgrims press me into a crowded second-class carriage. From my place of vantage, I saw two constables search my former train compartment by compartment, for their leader and, probably, for me. They could not make out what had happened to us. Suddenly, that train whistled—then slowly, ever slowly, began to pull out of Jubbalpore. Now, feeling that their prize was escaping them, they hastily opened a door of a carriage and jumped in, exactly three compartments away from the one where I had been.

"That was my last encounter with the secret service. I never saw any of them again.

"About September, 1921, I received information through one of our men in French India that the English Government wished to negotiate for

terms of a general amnesty with my people who had been in hiding until now. On receiving the news I set out in secret to Ahmedabad in order to visit Gandhi. His influence over India had become so great and so widespread that I must judge for myself, face to face, as to the source of his power before taking a step that would commit me, if not to his policy, at least to a non-resistance that would materially assist it.

"The settlement where he lives surrounded by his followers and co-workers is made up of small adobe houses, in one of which I found him—a little ugly man seated at a spinning-wheel. I made my identity known, and he asked me what I wanted of him. In answer I told him all that had happened during the past six years.

" 'Thou dost not hate the foreigner?' he questioned.

" 'No, Mahatmaji.'

"And Gandhi answered, 'Then thy course is easy.' "

My brother paused. "Dost thou remember," he asked me abruptly, "what those men who went out to see Jesus said on their return? Their words were, 'Never man spake like this man.' Such is Gandhi," said my brother slowly—"Never man spake like him. . . .

" 'Mahatmaji!' I answered, 'I come to tell you

that our party will not put an obstacle even as large as a blade of grass athwart your path. The descendants of Gods and sages understand: 'Soul-force against sword-force.'

"Since then," said my brother, "I have known Gandhi very intimately. There is no doubt that he is a man of passionate purity, so pure that any fault casts a shadow on his consciousness as the breath of the beholder blurs the surface of the mirror before him. He knows long before the rest of the world where he has hurt his Truth, and sets about to purify himself through fasting and prayer, and his self-chastisement is swifter than any devised for him by others, though he is delicate as a reed flute and slow as an elephant.

"I did not return by the same road I took to Gandhi. I wished to study the country and learn how the people felt about their saintly leader, so I came back by a long and tortuous route, telling my friends everywhere that truce must reign throughout the country.

"It took me six weeks to cover the distance. The tour convinced me that the common people were not stirring in their sleep, but were truly awake. I never knew before such widespread alertness in the man in the street. And it has grown apace since.

"On reaching Mathura again, I drew out the

terms of a treaty with the Government and sent them to the intermediary whom I have mentioned, in French India. The negotiations went on for a long time. About the first of November, the treaty was ratified, and we began to come out of hiding.

"The terms were these:

"First, that we should be called henceforth Nationalists and not anarchists or terrorists.

"Second, that the Government should drop all its charges against us as we gave up all activities against it.

"Third, that anyone of our party might hold office in the state or in private companies without being disqualified by past record.

"The next problem was how to send my followers home. All the money I had earned and all the money I could collect, I spent equipping each one decently for the return journey.

"During the War, I had believed in violent revolution and worked for it. But the Germans spoilt it all. We did not want a change of master. If we desired the British to go it was because we could not endure that any foreigner should rule us. But we failed to bring about that end, and with Mahatma Gandhi a new tide of activity had set in. A strong and new consciousness has now begun to operate through the multitudes. All we

can do is to stand aside and give this new consciousness a chance to work itself out."

"Yet dost thou believe in non-co-operation?" I asked.

"If the masses, who are the majority of the sons of India, believe it," he retorted, "who are we to criticize them? We the old militants must step aside and let them work out what they feel to be their own program. There is plenty to do. We too are busy. Without actually taking leadership in non-co-operation we can serve our country in many ways."

"In any other land," I thought, "one political party would not give up its work because a saint is leading another party. I can't imagine the Democrats retiring because a new Lincoln came to lead the Republicans.

"We are working now to preserve India's culture," went on my brother. "We believe that the peasants who number eighty per cent of the total population of India are the real Indians. All our folk-song, folk-music, folk-dances, and religious poetry have been preserved and kept intact by the peasantry. They alone are unsullied by foreign influence. Now if we can save them from malaria and other diseases, as well as preserve them from cutthroat creditors, we shall have done our duty. So we are building co-operative

farms and co-operative rural credit societies. Already our co-operative farms are being installed by neighboring farmers. We aim to stamp out malaria completely. It is a terribly exhausting disease, and if it is not destroyed, all of rural India will die of it soon. That in turn will deprive us of the most important part of our culture, which will be a great loss to humanity at large."

"Well," I remarked, "for active revolutionists you have chosen a pretty mild rôle."

"We are not out to play the romantic revolutionary," he answered. "We want to save India."

"How did malaria come into India?" I interposed.

"When a peasant hears that a railroad is to be put through his country he laments, 'Ah, with the fire-chariot comes the sickness.' And the peasant is right. The necessary construction of the railway breaks up the intricate network of small canals and ditches which for centuries kept the country drained and freed from mosquitoes. And when this primitive drainage is ruined and none put in its place, the water stagnates, mosquitoes are born, and malaria results. In half a century we have been reduced to a dying race by malaria; it is imperative that we should save the masses from death or from living on in a half-dead con-

dition. In order to do this we must have money; we cannot accept the reforms instituted by Montague and Chelmsford because they do not give us control over the national purse, and necessity demands that we have it. Our very existence depends on it."

"If you control the national purse, it is tantamount to driving Great Britain out of India," I protested.

"Yes, but I was going to add," said he, "that Great Britain's Indian investments should be guaranteed and safeguarded. The possession of India gives Britain such a prestige throughout the world that the British cannot afford to lose her, and thereby sink to the status of France or Holland. It is natural that Britain should do everything in her power to keep India, but no doubt India's best interests are in conflict with those of England, and probably the only way out of the difficulty is a compromise such as home rule with full dominion status. Under home rule, as enjoyed by Canada and Australia, India will become the mistress of her own home, and at the same time Britain's Indian investments will be thoroughly protected.

"To Britain, India is a question of imperial prestige and safety of investment. British rule tries to be benevolent, but what the country needs

is self-rule; not that India may be more benevolent, but that she may make her own mistakes, and learn by them. If expert Englishmen go on ruling India, they will learn a great deal at our cost, and the people of this land will remain error-proof and inexperienced as ever. But if we rule ourselves, we shall all make the mistakes that the British do and learn by them. India is not longing to destroy law and order; but she is eager to grow by using and making her own law and order. The Chinese used to bind their women's feet in early childhood, only to hurt the whole nation for ages to come. The same fate is overtaking us.

"Now, of course, the masses are thoroughly aroused. They are demanding their rights and equality. Before they pass beyond equality to a demand for superiority they should be placated by the bestowal of dominion status. That will be the way of wise statesmanship. The psychological moment for home rule is passing now; in half a dozen years from now, no Indian will be satisfied with it as a solution of the problem. Is there no statesman in Britain who can seize the present moment?

"Thou hast seen the factories on the banks of the Ganges? There were none fifty years ago; there were only a few twenty-five years ago; but look at them now. This is all the rich men make

of the beauty of our sacred river. We in India are not rebelling against Great Britain, but against the gluttony of the whole Western civilization. Think of our Mother Ganges put to such a use—this holy river that rang with the teachings of Buddha, and on whose shores Asoka built his temples; for thousands of years our ancestors have bathed in her, and when they died their ashes were thrown into her swift currents to be carried down to the sea—then contemplate the present! No wonder our masses believe that the Western civilization is an evil thing. India's soul is in danger."

"If that is thy meaning," I replied, "the soul of the entire East is in danger. China and Persia are threatened in the same way."

"True," he responded. "The materialist is bent on destroying beauty and holiness. Is not that the reason that Gandhi is looked upon not only as an Indian prophet, but as the 'trumpet of a new prophecy' for all Asia?"

One of the last questions that I asked my brother was whether he believed Bolshevism could succeed in India.

"No, no," he exclaimed with horror. "Bolshevism is a philosophy of acquisitiveness. India has to teach the world Renunciation. You cannot find God on the road to Mammon."

"Since thou hast traveled over so great a part of India for years, tell me," I asked, "what is thy conclusion about the unrest to-day? What is the essence of the people's life and outlook?"

"I will answer thy last question first. There is no doubt that the people of India are restless. Yet in spite of all the impending change, every peasant or artisan whom I have met and studied believes that life is a spiritual and not a material force. They all believe beyond any argument that this life is a bridge to immortality.

"As for the exact temperature of the Indian unrest to-day, that is hard to tell. The feverish feelings of the country are too volatile; the mercury goes up and down too often and too rapidly nowadays. Even an expert like myself, if he wishes to record the pulse of the country from time to time, must tour two-thirds of it at least twice a year. It is no more the same static eternal India that thou didst leave behind thee thirteen years ago."

My brother's story was finished, and the day was breaking in the eastern sky. The odors of the city changed from the mere odor of dust into that of smoke. The sun rose copper-colored and hot. Factory whistles blew all along the river bank. Voices echoed in the streets, and the bells of our temple rang, announcing morning medita-

tion. We went down from the roof to perform our ablutions in the sacred river.

On our way, I asked my brother, "What is thy explanation of the supernatural experiences that thou hast had during all thy life?"

"Why call them supernatural—that is a Western phrase," he answered. "To us, the natural is but a projection of the supernatural, and the supernatural but the continuation of the natural. All experiences are both. I think that they are not contradictory terms. Even eating and sleeping are supernatural experiences. In our country, not only Gods and men, but even animals are supernatural, for they all have souls."

CHAPTER XIII

THE HOUSE OF THE RICH

THAT some of my old friends had grown rich in India while I was in America was no fault of mine. So far as I knew, the War had so upset the economic life of India that some new groups had to become wealthy, and I admit I was a bit elated to find among them one or two friends of my own!

Nilu had begun life as a college professor, but now, at the age of thirty-six, he owned three factories and had seventeen hundred souls in his employ. I could not believe my eyes when I beheld the lad of five feet six, now grown somewhat rotund, jumping from his Rolls-Royce car! I simply could not entertain the vision as a reality, but there he was—coming to me with hands stretched out to take mine in his. How could he be my boyhood's friend and grow rich? Impossible!

He was stout, and pale-brown in complexion, with a round, beneficent-looking face. The short,

sharp nose was pugnacious, no doubt, but not the rest of him! Girlish eyes, large and deep and dark, an even brow, high, smooth, carefree forehead, and moderately marked chin—there was not a feature to indicate anything but the college professor. His mouth was small, its bow-shaped lips were like those of a child of six or seven. How could such a helpless fellow manage to be clever enough to be rich? To my mind, the acquisition of wealth presupposes a Mephistophelian ability, reinforced by a Napoleonic will-to-power; yet lo, here was a rich man who was Napoleonic in nothing but in stature!

I asked Nilu to be seated on the floor of our temple porch. He had come all the way from Calcutta to the edge of the town where we dwelt. Before us were a few trees, a green pasture, and the Ganges where people were bathing.

I spoke to him in English; for I couldn't imagine any other of our languages suited to the Rolls Royce car.

"It is very kind of you to come to see me, particularly now that you are so busy."

He fanned his face with his silken chudder. He was dressed in exquisite silk robes of ivory yellow from which his brown head rose like the fragment of a statue on an ivory pedestal. After having fanned himself for a while, he spoke as if reminiscencing.

"I wish I had my old courage to be poor, and had stuck to teaching history, but I cannot afford to be poor, and so I have no time to live. Look here, I want you to see something of our rich people. I shall put that car of mine at your disposal."

"But, my dear fellow, I do not need your car," I answered earnestly.

"Childish as ever," Nilu admonished me. "If you do not own a car you are no gentleman. That is one of the rules of our set."

"But I am a Brahmin; that I consider is passport to any place." I spoke loftily.

"Oh, no, my boy. That was all right before the War, but between the War and Gandhi the Brahmin's prestige has been knocked into a cocked hat. The rich, particularly the newly rich, are the model of our life. You must have the trappings of a rich man. Don't demur, old fellow, I shan't hear of it. In an hour, another car will come to fetch me. It is, let me see, four in the afternoon; I shall expect you to dine with us at seven. Use the car as your own as long as you are here, it will facilitate your entree into many exclusive places.

"By the bye, have you any telephone in this temple?"

That made me furious. "Telephone in the house of God!" I exclaimed.

"Of course not! How stupid of me," he said to himself, taking not the slightest notice of my indignation. "Well, I shall have to telegraph you from time to time. I want to show you what our Indian hospitality is. Let me just take charge of you; I want you to see what has happened here while you have been thirteen years in America. Golly! What a waste of time! I myself wasted three years in Harvard, but knew better than to stay. Yet I must say that America taught me how to get where I am."

Here my friend looked at his watch. It wanted some twenty minutes to five. He said, "I married out of caste, as you know. My wife is coming to meet you."

"What! A Hindu girl going about alone in an automobile?" I questioned in amazement.

"What do you want her on—an elephant?" Nilu hit back. "You have kept your medievalism alive in spite of America. Why shouldn't my wife go about in her husband's car?"

"Look here!" I began a long harangue. "I am very much obliged to you for your car. I am glad that you will show me the life of the new rich, but let us talk Bengali. Why are you so restless? India is eternal. Why look at your watch? Why should you count the minutes in Eternity? There is the Ganges; she flows on now

that the bathers are very few with the same inevitable ease as when the bathers were many in the morning.

"The English tongue that we have spoken registers only the froth and scum of our being. Now give thy heart's inmost talk. Let the wing of forgetfulness bear away the burden of work. Thou knowest that I long for the light of thy soul in the gaze of thine eyes, brother. It is an age since we dreamt on the green fields and by the rushing waters. I care not if thou art riding the stallion of wealth or walking on the unsandaled feet of poverty, only tell me thine inmost story, thy heart's longing, and thy spirit's dream. I meet thee across the river of boyhood on the shore of middle age! Tell me if thy head rests on the pillow of serenity and thy limbs repose on the couch of friendliness and love."

"Shiva Vishnu! Dost thou know I spend all my days speaking English?" he burst forth. "I deal with English firms; they send men who are ignorant of any tongue save their own, and I speak better than they. The hours of the day I waste talking alien speech! My soul has no time. My heart knows no serenity. My head rests—if rest that be—on the pillow of care. Gunga, mother of waters, I never see; I bathe in my private bath; I work in my private office. I am

alone—lonely as I used to be in solitary confinement when the British put me in prison on my return from America at the inception of the War."

"Did they charge thee with treason? Wert thou tried?" I asked.

"Nay, brother," he answered. "In the time of that insane slaughter, the State turned the key on anyone it suspected in any place it saw fit. I, among others, was never tried, and I was released after four years, when it suited the convenience of the State."

"How many were you?"

"We were fifteen in one beauty parlor (exact translation of Shrighar). At first they put us in solitary cells in order to make us confess what we might know. There I meditated on God, but somehow that did not help to soften the hearts of our jailers, so we all began a hunger-strike. I fasted sixty days. Rama, Rama, that broke the resistance of our jailers! Those protectors of peace did not wish to have us die, so when the third score of days passed and I would not break my fast, they gave us what we wanted and let us have our way in the King's hotel, as we called the jail. From now on we had books, papers, good food—and no more solitary confinement, and my soul could dream untrammeled by telephones, and unsought by visitors."

"It is strange that India's Harvard and Oxford graduates have given more of themselves to their country than Indians from other Western Universities," I remarked.

Nilu answered, "True, very true. Harvard University at present has contributed more men that follow Gandhi's teachings than any other American University where Hindus have studied. Harvard has the greatest prestige in India; for it has supplied us with the largest number of jailbirds!" he concluded in English.

Just then my friend's wife arrived in her car. She wore a beautiful sari of violet fringed with gold. I noticed that she had slippers but no stockings—her bronze-colored ankles needed no covering. . . .

It thrilled me when she knelt down and took the dust from my feet. Ah, still to be honored as a Brahmin—what a privilege! I was on the verge of tears. I blessed her: "Be thou thy husband's jewel of pride. Bear him royal sons."

Then all three of us took off our slippers and climbed the cool cemented stairway to the shrine proper two flights above. There we bowed to Krishna, then sat on the porch in silence for a time, until my sister came from our adjoining house to greet Nilu's wife. She offered us sweetmeats from the remnants of the noon offering to the god.

Nilu's wife touched the sacramental morsel to her forehead first, as a salutation to it, then put it in her curving mouth.

It was a pity they could not linger, but the Rolls-Royce stayed behind for my use. Again that violet-draped woman bowed to my sister and to me, took the dust from our feet, and went.

"Is there anything more beautiful than the good old courtesies?" I said to her husband, who saluted us after, following her example. I blessed them both. As they climbed into their car, Nilu said in English, "You know this salutation is a beautiful business for you Brahmins; but we, who are not Brahmins, feel as if our backs would break!"

At seven o'clock, armored in a starched shirt and a dress suit, I arrived in *my* Rolls-Royce at the door of a palace. It was built like the temple of Tanjore which looks a little as though it belonged to the best period of the French Renaissance. Electric lights were blazing away inside the building. As I entered, about half a dozen hands took my hat from me. "Mahadeo," I said to myself, "this is enough to kill a dozen multi-millionaires." I crossed the lower court of pure brown stone, and reached the sumptuous staircase at the other end. On the veranda of the second floor I found at least fifty men in evening dress and as many women in gorgeous saris, all the

wealth of Ormuz and of Ind glittering from their necks, arms, and heads. What jewelry! Of course they had bought art—they could not make it. They were all speaking English. "Is there no way of telling them," I said to myself, "that it is not our language?" Just then I looked up and, reflected in a great mirror, I saw myself in my evening dress, and realized that in that garb one must not speak an Oriental tongue. The long wings of Bengali would be broken like a butterfly's by the short, tight hardness of that costume. "So English it must be, Rama, Rama!" said I.

Nilu and his wife came forward from the other end of the room, and took me in charge. This time we shook hands in Western style: how abominable in India, between Indians! Yet, there was my dress suit——!

Very few of the guests had been to America; the majority were from Oxford and Cambridge, as their English accent betrayed. We from America were effusive and demonstrative, saying to one another, "Gee, I am tickled to death to meet you again. It gets me why so few Indians go to American colleges." The English University graduates expressed themselves in a matter-of-fact manner: "Is that you? Nice you could be here to-night. Oh, I see, you have been stopping at Naini, visiting S——. Topping place, Naini."

A few too proud to go out of their own coun-

try for an education had been to Indian colleges—brilliant men, speaking Bengali, in spite of their Western dress to-night.

"The Gods are kind. What bliss to find thee here. Support me with thy strength, lest I faint at thy feet, borne down by pleasure!"

Then the answer: "The river current of life is cruel if we pause not to greet a friend. To moor one's boat awhile and to behold a beloved face is the only respite from the inexorable tide, and to behold thee again is to receive reassurance from a god."

In a short time we drifted into the large dining-room. It was enormous. The tables were set in Western style, but the food was purely Indian. About thirty waiters dressed in immaculate white and turbaned in red waited on us. The ceiling of the room was high, as must be in all houses in the tropics, but the walls were painted and paneled in a Western mode; imagine a series of Watteau's "Cythereas" reproduced on English paper by a mediocre English designer. Against these horrors plastered on a hot wall move the faces of the bearded brown waiters!

"How *could* they?" you ask. But do not forget that these people can do anything, for they belong to that universal and all-powerful class of new rich who substitute factories for a copse by

a stream, whether they be in Europe, America, or Asia. Throughout the world, their thoughts follow the same direction. They are infallibly alike.

All of us were seated at many small tables. At mine were Nilu, his wife, a Doctor (an M. D. from the Chicago University), an Indian Novelist, flat-faced as a Chinese Mandarin, who sat at table as a stork on its tall legs by a river, and our hostess's twin sister, a Poetess—a rich widow, I learned, who wrote for the pleasure of writing, and who had been to America, but had received her education in India. Like our hostess, she had a delicate aquiline nose, oval face, a mouth like the Botticelli Madonna of the Magnificat, deep black eyes, and hair combed smooth and tied in a knot at the back of the head; but she had a harder glitter. Both wore ornaments in their hair; our hostess's was a red rose, the scarlet thing large as the fist of a boy of fifteen gleaming out of her jet black coils.

The Doctor was a Kashmiri, with all the dignity and appearance of Augustus. Since he knew very little Bengali, we spoke Hindi or English.

We ate twenty-six courses of which nineteen were vegetable preparations, three sweets, one meat, and the rest fish. There was some champagne; but very few drank it. It seemed to be

the only Western product that was not taken over wholesale.

Our conversation was more revealing than our appearance. We discussed authorship, and the Poetess said in Hindi: "The elephant's walk is stately, because it has to carry itself. Literature means the ability to carry one's weight in the lanes of expression. If you have a weight, you will carry yourself well. If you have not——"

"That pleases a scientist," the Doctor broke in in English. "I am not so sure that you are wanted—you literary souls. India needs doctors and factories,—two things the Occident has acquired already. Poetry exists no more in literature but in science. Whitman——"

"Doctor," said our hostess, the rose and the pearls in her hair trembling a little, "you may cure my baby of illness, but when he goes to sleep I have to sing to him. Is not that literature?"

But the Novelist flared up. "Literature is both an art and a science, as science is also an art. All Western literature is worthless, but in Dostoievsky art is keener than science. What did you doctors know of Prince Muiskin or Dmitri, until Dostoievsky gave sight to your blind science and pointed out their existence to you?"

Here I interrupted to speak to my host who was leaning back and looking about. He was

not eating much; he had lost his digestion in the rush of making a fortune in two and a half years. "Look here," I said—"you used to care for books, but now you care only to uproot beautiful forests and build forests of chimneys."

He pondered a bit, then said slowly, "The factory is bound to come to Asia, as it came to Europe: I know my history, and I conclude that we should exploit the opportunity. I who taught History for $100 a month and pretty nearly killed myself at it, can now clear ten times more in half the time. If a fool like me can do it, think of men who really have the commercial genius and how much more they can achieve!"

"But is it worth achieving?" asked the Poetess, whose diamond bracelets clinked against the glass as she sipped some water from it.

"Worth achieving!" Nilu exclaimed. "If we don't achieve it we shall be wiped off the map. Our nationalism may be inspired by Gandhi's soul; sooner or later it is men like myself who will give it the nourishment and sinews that will win the day. So let us pit our capitalism against Europe's, and we are bound to win, as Japan has done."

"Better dirty our own house ourselves than let the foreign hog in to do it," said the Doctor brutally.

The Poetess, with an exquisite gesture of her hand, brushed away an almost visible horror from before her eyes.

After dinner was finished, and we had adjourned to the ballroom, I saw on the veranda, for the first time in my life, among the couples that were sitting out Bengali women smoking. But Western women smoke; since it does no harm to them, why should I object to their Eastern sisters' doing the same?

I was relieved that neither the Poetess nor her sister danced, and would consent to withdraw into a corner far away from the sound of jazz and talk.

I asked Nilu's wife: "What do you make of all these rapid changes that are altering India?"

Smiling, she replied, "My son is what I give to India. I do not trouble about the rest." She raised her exquisite small hands to her forehead. "If what we touch we cannot make noble, how can we improve what is out of reach? I praise God for simplifying my task for me. Will you excuse me if I go upstairs now and see how he is sleeping?"

Then she left us, her bracelets sparkling as she drew about her her cerise robe and veil.

"Is she not beautiful?" I said. "The Indian

woman's dress flutters like the wings of a king-fisher."

The Poetess replied, "She is beautiful because her heart is full. She has passed through terrible suffering."

"What do you mean?"

She answered quietly, "Her husband was away from her in America three years, and when he landed in India he was immediately imprisoned and held for nearly four long years in perpetual danger of being put to death. She had to bear it all alone, helpless."

"That also is his power," I murmured. "He too gives me a sense of it which comes only from suffering."

"How happy they are now!" she went on absentmindedly. "He starved, meditated, and starved again in jail: all that has become coined into the gold of strength. No matter what he touches succeeds. He is investing the hard-earned capital of those four years; for suffering is the most precious capital, if men only knew how to invest it. And so, when my brother-in-law talks about driving the Western wolves of commercialism from the doors of India by creating a worse wolfishness of our own, I think of Shree Rama Krishna, our latest prophet, who said, 'I have

lived the spirit of every religion, and find that each one of them leads to the same God!' India may deal with the demonic commercialism of Europe not as my brother-in-law conceives, but as her own original soul sees fit."

Just then our hostess returned, and the conversation centered on her baby. But the noise of the jazz band reached my ears in spite of the wide berth I had given it. It was appalling. The heat of the night seemed to grow into the high temperature of a furnace at full blast. I felt my hard collar melting into warm glue. At last, unable to bear it longer, I took my leave of my hostess.

"Will you go with us to the Opera to-morrow?" she asked.

I accepted and saluted in Eastern fashion—putting the palms of my hands together and bending my head forward till it touched my joined palms.

Between rows of salaaming lackeys I fled from the mighty music of the jazz. Once in my Rolls-Royce, I begged the chauffeur not to go more than fifteen miles an hour: a slowly driven car may attain the dignity of a ten-year-old elephant.

That there is beauty in Calcutta I knew from childhood. So I had the car driven to the river bank. As we meandered toward it I heard snatches of song from stables, taverns, tea-houses,

and shops. Every now and then the sound would stab my heart with its beauty.

In the light of the electric lamp before a grocer's shop two women and three men—street performers all—played a violin and a drum and acted a play. I had to stop. This was my own—not jazz. The two women clad in fantastic colors danced an old-time folk-dance, while one of the men who was not playing any instrument sang—

"He who has the art of swimming
Fears not water,
He who loves God
Drowns not in ecstasy."

The song melody and rhythm were astonishingly rendered, and I wrote a rapid translation of the song on my somewhat dampened shirt cuff. That done, I drove on to the river bank, saying to myself, "This is India. These are the true sons and daughters of my country."

The transparent yet deep mist that rises in August like the limpid heart of a glowing emerald, had already spread from bank to bank, and under it burnt the innumerable lights of the boats like tigers' eyes in the verdure of the tropics. Beauty is fiercely close to us! If we only knew. . . .

The next day, the first of September, I per-

suaded my brother to go to the Opera with us. Looking at the paper, we found that an Italian company on its way to Australia had stopped in India to give a few performances in Bombay and Calcutta, and that to-night the Opera would be "Faust."

As we drove to the performance in the magnificent car, we admitted, Nilu, his wife, his sister-in-law, and I, that most of the Western music seemed to us "sound and fury," signifying very little. We all loved the chants of the Catholic Church, for they are like our own ancient music. Palestrina, too, we appreciated, but when Western music passed beyond Bach it became incomprehensible to a Hindu. The capacity for beautiful racket is not large in our race.

Through the rising blue mist like the wings of humming birds just beginning to flutter over the black currents of the Ganges, we sped to the theater where in a blaze of electric light Europeans and Westernized Hindus were jostling one another to reach their seats before the curtain rose.

The building was a cross between the Hippodrome and a tavern. By the wildest stretch of imagination one could not picture the descendants of Kalidasa and Shakespeare sitting in the presence of such monumental ugliness!

Then began the music of sugar and honey banging and whinnying its way through our ears. The Italian Faust along with an Italian Devil butchered with the invincible knives of sentimentality whatever austerity there was left in the plot. Then in course of time appeared Gretchen, a charming imbecile with a tolerable voice.

My brother whispered, "What has Goethe to do with this?"

I whispered, "Everything. He should have anticipated Gounod and this playhouse and never written a line of 'Faust.'"

The Poetess touched my elbow and pointed at the neighboring box where of three European men two were already dozing. "Effect of the heat!" I mumbled, though the electric fans were going full-blast. All hard-worked men are alike: Nilu in our box was snoozing beside his wife. And at the close of the Devil's mocking laughter at the lover's song, we all decided to go.

On our way back we drove through the Maidan and the heart of the city. Innumerable movie houses, exactly like those in New York, Paris, and London, blazed their electric signs in the face of the velvet black sky of India. Dorothy, Kimball, Mary, Marsh, Charlie, Lloyd, Myers, Negri, and Douglas—names, and fragments of

names innumerable, we read in letters of fire as we hurried home.

I asked Nilu's wife, since she was a musician, what she made of the opera.

She paused; then out of the darkness of her mind she said, "It is well contrived, but I like to hear something natural. Is there any Western music that sounds like the fluting of a stable-boy or the cry of a bird?"

After depositing Nilu and the ladies at their homes, we drove along the river bank, beautiful as the previous night. The stars throbbed in the sky.

My brother announced as we slowly went along: "I am afraid the heart of Western culture cannot be brought here. It is all imported dry goods that we receive, good enough, but not alive. I wonder if we can reach the European's inner spirit any more than he reaches ours. That music was like tinned food fed to souls educated in this environment which is so different and so strong that even the Europeans to whom that music is natural went to sleep over it here. Art and culture are very provincial; they cannot be imported or exported like hide and spices——"

The Rolls-Royce car showed me an aspect of Calcutta, in fact of all India, that I had not been so fully aware of before—namely, Hurry. The

tempo of my life and other people's everyday activity was not the same as years ago when men rode elephants, horses, and ox-carts, and mostly the latter. I found myself the whole of the following week telephoning and telegraphing to people as if I were on a lecture-tour speaking three times a day. What was most exasperating was that if I was late by half an hour to any appointment the man whom I was to meet would not be there. He was to-day too busy to wait thirty minutes even for an old friend, for time is cash. "Everyone is busy," I was told. My lawyer who settled all the problems of inheritance for me was always hurrying from the last client to me and hurrying from me to his next. India is not only changed, but will continue to change so rapidly that no one will recognize the temper and spirit of the people if he absents himself from the country six months.

Let me warn all Americans who read Kipling that if they go to India now they will find no longer the country that he wrote about thirty years ago. Events and characteristics of the people merge and re-emerge in strange shapes and forms from rainfall to rainfall. As with every fall of rain the tropical jungle becomes something new, so do the people of India to-day. The mischief has been wrought by Gandhism, automobiles, and

the telephone. Gandhism has taken away from us our last bit of faith in the virtue of the European, as well as our cherished belief in the permanence of our social institutions.

To-day there are two powerful forces in India: rich men and Gandhimen, modern industrialism and the spirituality of medieval India. The two have come to grips. No one can foretell the outcome. The most perplexing thing in the struggle is that medievalism is now master of resiliency and speed; it may outspeed industrialism.

CHAPTER XIV

FACES, OLD AND NEW

THE week following that evening at the Opera I spent in diverse ways. I paid some visits to the homes of wealthy friends, but also went about looking for the old Calcutta. This took me across the river into small villages where beauty and spirituality yet dominated houses and fields. It was a varied and interesting week.

One day I asked an old lady of seventy, whom I knew, to take a ride with me in the Rolls-Royce.

"Not I," said she, and when I begged her for a reason she replied:

"I have never yet set foot in a car, for it will not carry me as do the palanquin-bearers. They sing as they go, and soon I forget everything but the slow-moving distance and their song. Can your car sing like a quartette of litter-bearers?"

I quoted to her a litter-bearer's song. She said: "I know one better than that. Listen:

" 'Heavy, heavy——
Heavy, heavy, heavy;
He ate——too much.
My shoulder, my shoulder——
It aches, it aches,
It aches——aches:

He has a big belly;
Belly, belly, belly:
Carry him——
The curse, the curse——the curse
Of a pot-belly, belly belly, belly.' "

"But Grandmamma," I expostulated, "the English rendering of it is more beautiful. Listen:

" 'Lightly, O lightly——
Carry her along;
She hangs like a pearl
On the thread of our song.' "

"Oho!" she exclaimed. "How outrageously false their tongue must be"; and unwilling to hear my sweetened poetry, she went on: "Your ear cannot sing; besides, it runs in indecent haste."

"So it does," I agreed.

Whereupon, with a complete change of front, she announced: "I suppose an old woman is above any sense of shame. I will ride this painted monster."

We were off for the day. We visited all the obscure temples, bazaars, palmists, horoscope-casters, and medicine-men who pray to Allah for one's ailments that could be found within reach, returning toward sunset by the bridge thronging with ox-carts, pedestrians, automobiles, and what not.

She was an astonishing soul. She had the face of an aged cat and the tongue of a poetic journalist. There was nothing about religions and charms that she did not know. She was like a brown and ancient sibyl, or one of those cat-headed goddesses of Egypt, and it seemed quite natural that her special detestation should be the modern Hindu woman. With her right forefinger in my face and those topaz irises of hers blazing, she fulminated:

"To them religion is a word, and God a by-word. They want to read books. They want to be nurses and doctors—as if the male doctors have not given us enough diseases! Marriage they think is not enough, child-bearing is a part and not the whole of ambition to them; one of these days they will take pride in being barren! Some now are speaking in public for a madman called Gandhi, and it is you men who are causing all this folly; because your loins are weak as a river reed you are teaching women to be proudly

barren. Shame upon shame! No God, no religion, no children; what right has a soul to be born a woman if it desires not these three? The brazen ones, they go about unveiled, they talk with men about what women do in other lands, they walk no more barefooted but in shoes—shoes of shame, and with faces unveiled of grace! I am glad I am old: I shall die soon and close my eyes on women without wombs and men lean as a thread. Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Durga Kali!" she swore.

Soon the short tropical twilight passed and the darkness fell like a crash. I had the car stopped near a wayside temple, where the old lady wanted to meditate. She left me behind and disappeared in a garden above which one could very vaguely discern the white spire of a temple.

I pondered on the fruitless women of our time; but one cannot ponder forever and at last I grew weary of waiting and decided to go and fetch the ancient dame from her already hour-long meditation. By the light of the stars I made my way into the garden. I struck a gravel path and followed it—nothing in sight, and it seemed to have no end; I imagined that I heard a snake hiss in the dark. Presently, from my right came a melodious sound, then silence. I turned to the right and began to walk across what felt to me like a

lawn. Hardly had I gone a dozen paces when the same melodious chant came again. I pressed on in the direction of the sound.

Suddenly, out of the intense blackness a white temple leaped into view; hardly twenty feet away. Somewhere within I saw a dim light burning around which hovered the whirring wings of a thousand humming birds.

It was the priest praying:

"Thou art one without a second,
Thou, matter, mind and Spirit,
Ruler,
Upholder,
Artificer of the worlds:
As the current in the water,
As the essence that informs Form,
Thou art in our heart.
Thou art unborn, because death toucheth thee not;
Ever-present, forever elusive:
Immutable, the cause that slips out of the effect ere we say it causes.
Virtue is but a light that dances around thy feet,
Thou immutable dancer of reality in the rhythm of appearance!
Light that no light can capture,
Silence that no sound can express,
Come, come!
Thou art empty as the heavens

Yet all the shining worlds are enclosed by thee;
Proceed from within our souls,
And crown us with that utter fulfillment
Whose richness men in their poverty of words
Name the Nothingness Supreme!"

Nothing moved, no one stirred during the short sharp pause that followed. There must have been fifty people sitting on the porch of the temple listening, and by now meditating on "the light that no light can capture."

Now the priest spoke again, lifting the lamp and coming forward to the entrance door of the shrine. Everyone fell upon his face.

"Harken unto me, O Children of Immortality——
I have seen Him!
He is within you;
Summon That which is Within,
To make clear your way
Through the forest of Without!"

One by one the congregation rose and dispersed. Soon I heard my old lady say, as she drew near, "So even you who run about in that indecent chariot of haste were compelled to pay tribute to God!"

Grandmamma proved useful to me. That

night when I dropped her at the door of her house, she told me that on the grounds of the temple would be given next day a play for the artisans and other village folk, by a group of strolling actors; would I go? Of course, I would. That is what I had come to India for. I lost no time; I invited Nilu, his wife, and sister-in-law, my brother and Grandmamma.

At about eight in the evening in a temporary pavilion in the garden of the temple, we found ourselves seated in a crowd of at least five hundred people. The fame of the leader of the players—Bilasa, an assumed name, meaning enjoyment—had spread all over the neighboring villages and drawn a goodly audience of artisans, factory hands, Brahmins, and women. There were just as many women as men. If the art and culture of India are to be saved, it will have to be through the people, as yet untainted by gramophones, brass bands, and cinemas.

We, the audience, surrounded the actors and the chorus in their make-up and costume. Very near them, but dressed as the audience, were seated the instrumentalists—two violinists, one cymbal-player, and one drummer. They were tuning their instruments—it sounded like an exchange of hard words between a frog and an alley-cat.

The white-robed audience, a mass of brown faces, was busy conversing. Grandmamma in our group was telling us about Bilasa, the director, manager, and employer of the players. "His mother and father, in fact, the whole ancestry of the monkey-faced fellow, were Brahmins. I knew his grandmother well—a pious gossip of the wildest tongue. He threw up his job as a priest, and became a wastrel and a dramatist. He composes, teaches, and acts his plays—an idiot, and a buffoon! Look—there he goes!"

Just then Bilasa, dressed in Dacca muslin of purplish hue, treading like a "bull of a man," as we say in India, or walking like a Roman proconsul, came through a narrow passage leading through the audience. This passage was kept open all through the play, to the stage—a space about fifty feet in circumference at the center of the pavilion draped in spotless white linen. Bilasa walked into the heart of it with a pair of very small brass cymbals, not larger than castanets, in his hands. He looked like Alexander the Great in bronze. His longish curls hung crisp like black hyacinths. His brown skin shone in the light of the chandeliers and the hundreds of candles.

"What a godlike pose!" I exclaimed.

Grandmamma answered, "He has to look godlike, he is acting the part of Destiny."

Bilasa smote one cymbal upon another, making a shrill, clear, tinkling noise. That cut all speech short in the audience. Silence reigned. Beyond him over the many heads I could see the starry sky like a wall of black where crawled silver insects.

Bilasa pronounced a benediction on the audience, ending it by a short, slightly staccato sentence, "Look in the play, 'The King's Hunt,' for what is within you." Then the cymbals crashed anew, followed by a short melody played by the seated musicians. Bilasa declaimed to the accompaniment of music, punctuating with his own cymbal-crashes, "King Dasaratha goes upon a fatal hunt. The pleasure of hunting beasts will turn into the spectacle of human slaughter and from that he will reap the harvest of a curse."

Here the chorus, six men and four boys, rose reiterating the beat of the walk of Fate. They were dressed in long flowing robes of saffron. They sang a short argument: "The King, feverish with the urge of youth in his limbs, decides in the morning to go on a hunt. Alas, instead of killing the golden buck—O fate—O play of Karma!—he kills an innocent young man."

The chorus sat down, and the King arose, bearded, be-turbaned in golden silk, draped in the brown silk of the hunting costume, a bow slung

from his left upper arm and a long sharp spear in his right hand. He was followed by his attendant shabbily dressed but huntsman-like in appearance and equipment.

The two had a long dialogue charged with foreboding. Evil Omens had beset their way. The Attendant had had a dream symbolizing danger, but Dasaratha declared that, being a King, he was above fear, and hurling his arrows, he simulated the killing of his prey. The Chorus rose again, and sang the agony of the dying beast and reiterated in the tread of human feet the beat of the walk of Fate. "Karma, Karma, Karma—we receive what we gave"—they wailed, as they sat down.

The King rose to speak. Just then Bilasa was heard from among the audience:

"There is a river, where animals come to drink at midday. At—Mid—d–a–y," Destiny whispered in a soft clear tone. The King said to the Attendant, "My mind tells me that at midday when the thirsty animals come to drink of yonder river we can shoot them from cover." But the Attendant was still fearful from his dream of bad omen.

As they went toward the river they saw the goddess of the jungle, protectress and mother of the jungle folk, dancing with her Kumaris (nymphs and dryads). The King and the At-

tendant hid behind a tree, and from the audience rose girls in robes of delicate and exquisite colors with bells around their ankles, who performed a dance symbolic of the forest-spirit, ending as it had begun, suddenly. Destiny again prophesied —"All life is sacred. He who kills a fellow-creature kills what he loves."

The King and the Attendant had reached the river bank now, and hid themselves behind a bush. The Chorus again sang another homily.

The King and the Attendant grew weary of waiting for their quarry. There were false alarms—the branches on yonder tree shook, the water trembled; but alas, nothing came their way. It were better to start homewards. . . .

"But listen, Your Majesty!"

"Yes?"

"There is something moving up the river. It is drawing nigh. Sh-s-sh—I hear it. But I see nothing. Oh, if I could but see it! It must be a deer, Majesty?"

"Yes. But why cannot I see it? I hear it drink. Oh, if I could but glimpse it through those bushes!"

"It is moving away!" exclaimed the Attendant.

At that the King hurled a spear. A profound silence followed. Then the sky was rent by a terrible human cry of pain.

The Chorus rose singing, "An act of evil is

loosed on the world—who can stay its fatal momentum? Death begets death! Curse upon curse!"

Alas, they had fatally wounded a young man who had come to fetch water in his pitcher! Here the instruments played a short fragment of a tune, then the wounded man told the King that he was a Brahmin lad who lived with his parents near by. He was the staff, stay, and sustenance, the feet and hands, the mouth and eyes of his parents. With these words the youth died. The King and his Attendant raised the corpse and bore it, while the Chorus sang, to the center of the stage and the home of the dead man's parents. "Behold an aged man and his wife groping about!" Just then a blind old man, bare to the loins, and a blind old woman wrapped in a red-bordered sari, rose and began to speak their lines.

"What a son we have! He is not only our eyes but——"

"He is good as a god, strong as a Titan, and sweet as a girl."

"What a son, indeed a divinity!"

"He never leaves us but to procure food and drink for us."

"Listen, I hear his returning footsteps."

"Son, son! Art thou back already? Thou hast been gone a short while, brief as the sinking of a stone into the deep."

"Son, son!"

Now appeared the two men carrying the corpse of their child—their only shelter and support in this world.

"O fatal act! O cruel sport! The blind parents cannot even see the wound on their son. They must feel it with those hands that nursed and brought him through childhood to his brief man's estate," sang the Chorus.

The play ended with a curse upon Dasaratha, the King. As he deprived the blind parents of their boy, so he will lose his own divine son Rama.

As we went out, Grandmamma was about to say something, but I urged her not to dim with talk the message of the folk-play, so we drove home in silence that night.

I could not sleep. About one in the morning a thunderstorm broke. It rained heavily for an hour, but I was thinking, "If the episodes of the Ramayana can be acted and appreciated by the masses, how dare we, their kindred, encourge cheap elements of Western art? Think of a Greek who could have Homer for the asking, running after Harold Lloyd! That is what the Western importers and we, Westernized Indians, are doing to India. . . ."

But some weeks later I was saying to myself, "The greatest nuisance in India is the telephone." I had received a long distance message from Dar-

jeeling in the Himalayas and a matter of twenty hours' railway journey was thereupon settled in three minutes. Nilu, his wife, and baby were in the hills, and I was ordered to bring one manservant and one maid in the car and join them.

I must admit, however, that it was good to motor through four hundred miles of plains, at the end of which the Himalayas rose straight as a knife cutting the sky.

Darjeeling is a beautiful city, were it allowed to put something else on its housetops. The ground is not strong enough there to support roofs of greater weight than so many inches of corrugated iron, which look perfectly hideous against the background of the hills, but I am told it cannot be helped.

At present it is a paradise of tea-planters, rich Indians who spend the summers here, and Occidental tourists who come to behold the Gauri Shankar (Mount Everest). Here the Indian rich, and the powerful English officials give parties to one another. Any day in the morning paper you will find that so many Indians and so many Europeans are being entertained at his table by the Governor of the province. Kipling's India has passed; the Orientals and Occidentals are mixing more than they did in the time of Chandra Gupta and Alexander the Great.

I met some important people in Darjeeling. I had the good fortune to be given a short audience by the Governor and we discussed the only subject appropriate in India—religion. His observation was:

"Your race is profoundly religious, but it is not profoundly interested in creating institutions like orphanages and hospitals which result from religious activity in the West."

It pleased me immensely when he said, "Your race," for at that time whatever excluded me from the West sent a pang of joy through me.

Darjeeling is a city of extremes. At one end of it is the seat of power, at the other the lane of pilgrimage. Here at one time was the key-monastery where pilgrims came down from Thibet on their way to India: its name then meant the Seat of the Bolt. Now nobody cares what it means, but in the olden time it was the place that, like a thunderbolt, cleaved the walls of illusion for the pilgrim and showed to him the wonders of pilgrimage—the sweeping plains of Buddha's own country below, and on the other side, above, the leap and surge of the precipices, tier upon tier, avalanche upon avalanche, till the very sky it seems may be brushed by one's hand as a child brushes a cobweb in the corner of his nursery.

Darjeeling was probably where Kalidasa stood;

and before him Valmiki, and long before both of them the Cantor of the Vedic hymns, calling the Himalayan clouds, "Those white bulls," whose silver horns still pierce the very heart of the sky.

Here through the Christian era passed Bhababhuti, Varavi, Fa Hien, Huen Tsang—poets, pilgrims, Brahmins, Lamas, going to and from the court of China to the court of the Emperor of India. Even now, but a day since, I met here Lamas coming from Thibet to pay homage to India, the birthplace of the Lord. They told their beads and strolled by me chanting, *"Om Mani Padme Om!"*—for was it not the city of the key-monastery whose windows gave on India? *They* knew what its name meant: the Seat of the Thunderbolt!

But India is changing, as I have said. Men and women danced here now to syncopated music, and my friends introduced me to people who played among those hills, young persons who talked psychoanalysis, flirted somewhat, and danced. I was introduced to one girl, a Miss Bondo, who was an Oxford graduate, and knew Greek, but not a word of Sanskrit; yet when she recited the Odyssey in the original and I the Ramayana, the music of both was alike. That slight fact no mentor had ever revealed to her until that day when we looked at what she called

with her English friends, "the hills." Then when we matched "the surge and thunder of the Odyssey" with the "Sun-humbling" poetry of Valmiki, she realized what had been done to her soul in England—she was Europeanized in every essential save her complexion. Of course, her Greek gave out long before the tenth of my Sanskrit, for I was taught the common way—by memory; but she was taught in and from a book. No one should be taught from books!

What did she look like? She was brown as a brown birch in June. She was about five feet four—all nerves and no flesh, small bones, small hands and feet. She had an exquisitely modeled face, but her eyes were not like our eyes; the ten years that she had spent in England had made them English, with no velvet somberness in their depths. She wore Indian dress, not because she cared for the art of India, but because it gave her a great distinction. Oh, yes, she was modern!

After our blessing the hills in Greek and in Sanskrit, I bade her good-bye at her door.

At dinner Nilu, his wife, and I decided that the next morning, at two o'clock, we would start to walk to a precipice called the Tiger Hill in order to behold the sunrise on Gauri Shankar (Everest) and the Kintchenjingha (the Golden Limb) peaks, supposed to be the highest on earth.

At two in the morning then, we began our uphill march. About half-past four we reached the Tiger Hill; and soon we felt a silver sigh run through the spaces, soft yet distinctly noticeable as the yawn of her child to the mother in the next room; then the darkness again closed down upon us. The stars throbbed like claws of light silently scratching against one's window-pane—relentless enigmas besetting man's mind. It was very uncomfortable.

Again a silver shock ran through the darkness, as if a thread of light came through a curtain. Again the blackness of night shut to like doors of jet.

Then a bird cried, then stopped; you could hear it gently spread its sleepy wings. A shudder of silver light ran through everything. The stars lifted their enigmatic faces, then slunk away one by one. Another bird cried out from another tree. More light fell about us like shadows, yet not shadowy.

The spaces below showed that we stood above a churning dark sea of clouds blotting the plains out of sight. Before us yet stood a wall of dusk and silence.

Suddenly, a trumpeting of gold rose in the east. Below it ran a silver light like the slow zigzagging of lightning. The clouds below caught fire, and

before us the wall of inky silence began to crumble down. Now a crimson runner coursed the starless sky. Again the golden tearing of the spaces—and lo, there were the silvery hills down whose sides ran cataracts of fire! In no time peak upon peak, horizon upon horizon strode backward through space, and over them leaped the sun—a stallion of burning gold. Who could resist singing to God now:

"O thou blossom of Silence,
Come through the dustless paths of Mystery,
Come through the ancient ways known only to Thee,
And with our prayers go forth to His Presence;
Be Thou our Advocate before the Speechless God!"

On our return to Darjeeling, I met Miss Bondo on the Mall. "Did you see the sunrise to-day?" I asked her.

"Last night we jazzed so long and late, that I could not get up early," she answered.

The next day I left Darjeeling.

I have said severe things against the gluttony and the selfishness of the rich industrialists of India; there are exceptions, though few. One of those exceptions is Ordhendu Gangooly, our very

important and widely respected art critic. His books on *South Indian Bronzes* and *Modern Indian Artists* are the best of their kind, and on my return to Calcutta I determined to visit him.

Gangooly made his money as an attorney of the Calcutta High Court. He never goes abroad, nor does he mitigate with Western comfort any of the rigorous austerities of his life. Outside the buildings of the High Court no one has ever seen him go about in European dress; he wears the long flowing white garb of a Brahmin. He is a fair-looking man, but what impresses one most about him is his serene countenance. One notices his prominent brow and jet black hair; a very tidy dark mustache shades his upper lip, and it is when he smiles that one really sees his mouth; then it is like a joyous child's, but once he closes his lips they are like a fast-locked door. All these distinctions of feature are made enchanting by a complexion just light enough to show the ebb and flow of blood in his face, according to the whimsies and moods of an artist.

Gangooly has perhaps the finest private collection of Indian art in Calcutta. In his house as you enter you see old Rajput paintings, Thibetan frescoes adorning the walls of the staircase of the small inner piazza, while his drawing-room, whose floor he has had covered with pillows and

cushions in good Oriental style, has its walls decorated by living Indian artists whom he guides with his criticism and patronage.

To enter this house is to go into the India of a hundred years ago. Gangooly still performs all his religious rites. He does not eat food that is not cooked in his own house; he is a true and living Brahmin, though a master of English laws and well known in the legal profession, and he is one of the handful of his caste who are rich.

When I was with him he surprised me by asking questions about American painters. His brother too, who is a painter himself, knew more about American painting than I did. They asked me about their friend Maurice Sterne, the painter, about Rose O'Neill, the photographs of whose drawings they had procured, and about Chase, whom they declared to be the inimitable and unique fishmonger of all art. Then they spoke of Innes, Murphy, and Blakelock, of whom they talked the most. Among living sculptors they cared only for Borglum, but they gave St. Gaudens the primacy over all American sculptors.

While we were talking we saw from the large iron barred window a limousine stop at the front door of the house, from which emerged, swathed in draperies of rare silk, a most voluminous Marwari, a money-lender. We could hear him puff

and pant his way upstairs to us. After saluting Gangooly, he said, "To-day is Saturday, the Court opens Tuesday, Monday being a holiday; will you not look over that point that we spoke of when we parted?"

"That was yesterday when the Court was open," exclaimed Gangooly.

"Yes, but you can think it over to-day, to-morrow, and Monday," explained the Marwari emphatically.

To that, after a deliberate shake of his head, Gangooly said firmly, "I do not meddle with the Law on holidays. I shall take that point up Tuesday next; to-day I talk art."

The Marwari received the announcement of the Brahmin art critic as his ancestors would have done from a true Brahmin of their own time. He saluted his attorney, then slowly turned his fat body round and walked downstairs like a cathedral groaning on crutches.

The incident revealed Gangooly's spirit; as for his opinions, the reader must go to his books, which are translated into English.

By now I was so used to the automobile which my friend had put at my disposal, that it irked me to see people walk! I used to say to myself, "Why the—don't they get an automobile?" It does not take long to corrupt an immature per-

son; the test of luxury is something that I cannot stand, though I have survived that of poverty, so far.

After Nilu's return, he and I went to the north country to visit a friend of my brother's who was a Mohammedan mystic. Though the streets were somewhat muddy, owing to the previous night's rain, the drive through the country full of harvesters and rich grain fields was thrilling. Once we had a blow-out, which gave us an opportunity to stop and listen to the harvest-songs. From near and far, over tides of waving grain and under an intensely blue sky, snatches of music flung from singer to singer ran to and fro like a shuttle of magic in a golden loom weaving an ever-growing fabric to vesture the limbs of Beauty. It is a pity that the latest inventions have rendered punctures so easily remediable. Hardly had we heard the sharp swish of the scythe and the songs of toil when the motor purred like a tigress feeling comfortable at the sight of her coveted prey, and we were off, snorting and honking. The fields ceased to be living things, and become again gyrating patches of space.

We reached the mystic's house at last—a fine concrete structure, painted violet. As we went up the front steps and shook the chain, the door opened slowly and an old female servant, veiled

and of forbidding appearance, showed us into a parlor. The blue floor was covered in the middle with an ancient Armenian rug, and the walls were hung with Persian miniatures of the late seventeenth century. We sat down on one of the rugs and soon the Sufi, dressed in bright spotless white, entered the room through a door at its other end.

"Khosha-moodi, Khosha-moodi," he greeted us —"Welcome with blessings!" and what a salaam he gave! Ah, these Mohammedans are all great gentlemen—such a sweep of the hand, so stately a bow, with the sudden stop at the end like an arrow hitting the mark! I am afraid the whole world will have to go to school and learn courtesy from these descendants of the Moghuls and from the Northern Chinese—the two most naturally stately folk I have ever met.

After the greetings were finished the Kalipha, as I enjoyed calling him, sat facing us from the other end of the rug. He was a vigorous man of about fifty, with his beard and hair turning gray. He had a small white turban on his head, but his long locks flowed out from under it; his hands were slender and large, strong as steel and flexible as silk, but his mouth was weak. That he was not rugged became more and more evident as he talked. His pantheism reduced the world into

a stagnant pool of liquid sugar, but once in a while when he spoke Arabic, the ring of iron hit by iron charged his utterance.

As I listened to his exhortation, I felt that though perhaps the world might require love, it need not be smothered with it.

But the Sufi was about to crack a joke: "All worship is ostentatious, unless man worships in his own heart. Saadi was going through the streets of Ispahan when he heard a man chanting the Koran in a deafeningly loud voice. Saadi asked, 'Why dost thou shriek so?'

"The man said, 'I am worshiping God. I shout for God's sake!'

"Said Saadi: 'Then for God's sake, shout no more!' "

Now I asked my eternal question:

"Master, why should men do good? Is there any reason for doing good?"

"Ask instead," he answered, "why should not men do evil?"

The Sufi stroked his beard with his long fingers. He coughed a bit in order to clear his throat, then hesitating and pondering as if looking for the right words for his speech, he began: "Evil that thou canst do to thyself, through thyself, without in the slightest degree touching another mortal,

that evil it is permitted thee to do. But evil, like good, is not done thus: there is always another whom it touches. That is forbidden."

"Why is doing evil to others forbidden?" I demanded.

"Because thou knowest so little of another soul that thou hast no right to inflict evil upon it. But if thou knowest another wholly and completely, as God knows him, then thou canst do whatever thou seest fit. Even to thyself thou must not do evil, for thou knowest not thyself through and through as God knoweth thee."

"If we do not know our own self, then why do even good?" Nilu asked, with his pop-eyed face full of inquiry.

The Sufi answered, "When a blind man walks on a familiar road, almost too familiar to his feet, even then, he carries a stick for his guidance. Why? Because, brother, it will help him. So with doing good: we are all blind about our own paths in life, but the staff of goodness may enable us to walk better. Even if God did not exist, we must do good as the blind man wields a stick, for as the staff to him, so is our good deed to us. As the blind man uses that wooden finger of his to touch stones and bring them to life for his own guidance, so with our finger of goodness we touch others whom we bring to life for our own guid-

ance; without it we shall stumble and fall, and crush others under our weight."

When he had finished what he had to say, the Sufi rose and went to bring his family to meet us. His wife and two daughters unveiled their faces in our presence as they brought us fruits, sweetmeats, and sherbet to drink. Since these ladies yet remain behind the veil, I have no right, as they would think, to shame them by describing them to the reader. They showed their faces to us, because my brother and the Sufi called each other, "Brother," and Nilu and I were introduced to them as my brother's brother and his friend.

All India admits that, next to Gandhi, the man who commands the greatest attention is the poet Rabindranath Tagore; and this is due not altogether to the fame of his poetry, so dear to every Indian. He is conspicuous as a critic of his own country with whose social, political, and economic problems he concerns himself, but beside this, he is the founder of a University, and people never cease to be amazed at this originality on the part of a peddler of words.

The site of the Vishwa Bharati (World College) is in the uplands at Bolpur, about three hours from Calcutta, and I set out eagerly from there to visit the poet in his new surroundings—I say new, for the college is only a few years old,

though Tagore has always fused his life with the living reality of the place.

It was blazing noon when I reached my destination. Great mango groves surrounded the buildings, and as I entered their shade the sweet plaintive sounds of cooing doves met my ears, and then the notes of a flute. It proved to be one of the workers playing under the trees who made that heart-breaking music.

The college buildings consist of four main houses that are not unlike those of the French Renaissance, and of many adobe huts. In one of the smallest of these lives Tagore, who, I learned afterwards, had given his own palatial house to the University.

My telegram announcing my arrival had miscarried, and the Master was not at once free to receive me, so a member of his faculty took me in charge and showed me about the place. He told me that there were three hundred students in the Vishwa Bharati, including those of the lower school, and from his description, I gathered that the courses followed were similar to those at Cornell University in the United States. Departments of medicine and engineering were still lacking, however, owing to the expense of their establishment, but there was a very fine agricultural training school.

My cicerone told me that fully to understand the University, one must do more than see it, more than read the poems of its founder, more even than meet the man himself. One must know something of the Maharshi, the poet's father, whose spirit pervades it like a perfume. He, at the age of twenty-three, inherited from a spendthrift father an estate burdened with debt, but as the property was in the name of the widow and children, it could not be attached for payment. The young man, when he learned this, at once called his father's creditors to him, and said:

"I will not consent to receive my inheritance until you have been paid in full."

The creditors, amazed at this generosity, accepted only a small fraction of the property in cancellation of the debts.

The young man married and begat a family, and lived according to his Brahmin tradition, and when his wife died disappeared for fifteen years to meditate among the solitudes of the Himalayas. On his return, he bought the land backed by the blue hills of Dumka, making his home where the University now stands. He chose the spot, he said, because it was holy, and the people of the vicinity proclaimed that a Maharshi, a supreme teacher, had come into their midst. It was his custom to meditate upon God for thirty-six hours

at a time. It is told of him that one day he exceeded the usual period of God-consciousness, and that the servant seeking him in the garden where he prayed, beheld the holy man in trance and oblivious to a terrible danger. There behind him crouched a thief, brandishing a bare knife. But before the servant had an opportunity even to cry out, the Maharshi opened his eyes and without turning around said to the thief:

"My friend, if thou desirest aught of me. . ."

But the sentence was never finished, for the criminal cast himself at the Master's feet and wept. From that day on his would-be murderer became his devoted follower, and vied with the servant in caring for him.

This father of Tagore is the foundation stone of the Vishwa Bharati, and all the land and property of the University bear the memory of his footprints. Could a better site have been chosen for a temple where youth comes to worship Truth?

That the spirit of the Maharshi abides here still, we must all believe, for only on consecrated ground could his son's radical changes be accomplished without arousing opposition. The University has not a single enemy, though Tagore himself makes many by his stringent criticisms of his country.

It is one of the few places in the world to-day that really deserves the name of University, for it is in truth universal. Here some of the very best scholars from the West co-operate with Eastern teachers of like eminence and purity. I found students from all over the world. Though the majority of them were Hindus, they did not drown the minority into non-existence. On the contrary, the foreigners were helped to remain as foreign as possible, that their individuality might be enhanced and not lost in this Oriental environment.

I have spoken of the radical changes that Tagore has accomplished in the University. Three of them are revolutionary, and yet they have never been attacked by any one!

First of all, this is the only co-educational University in India. It is astonishing to find in any Asiatic country an institution of learning having resident pupils based on equality of the sexes.

Next, the Vishwa Bharati has introduced a new practice in the Hindu drama. Ever since the Mohammedan Conquest the parts of women in Indian plays have been taken by men. In any exception to this rule the social status of the actress has been too obvious to need comment. But against such a tradition, Tagore's University has the courage to give plays in which gentlemen and

gentlewomen students take the parts suited to their sex.

The third revolutionary practice of the Vishwa Bharati is the abolition of caste and race distinctions.

To my mind, its most important achievement is the subservience of the collegium to the community ideal. I have spoken of the agricultural courses. This department is situated in the midst of a large peasantry, who, I learned, are as much a part of the University as the students and instructors. What the college teaches must be verified under the eyes of the peasants, and what the peasants want they come to the University to seek. The idea of co-operation thus given to Indian life will solve many problems.

When the first tractor was brought to the college, a group of villagers came to inspect it. They blazed with instant dislike at the sight of the machine, and one old man expressed the feelings of the people:

"The wind-carriage came to drive our elephants out of business," he said, "and now this abortion of witchcraft will put an end to our oxen. No more will our brothers the beasts help us in our toil—they will all have to go."

However, after the machine was started and the peasants saw what it accomplished, they were

somewhat crestfallen, but they went away, saying hopefully:

"To-morrow it will break down."

Yet the days passed without any collapse of the monster; instead, they saw the tasks set for it finished without delay or accident. Finally, the old man stood forth and said to the villagers:

"There is no doubt that this creature doeth the work of ten oxen."

Then they held a consultation among themselves, and went to the professor, who demonstrated the machine, demanding to know its price. To his answer, they replied:

"Lo, it is too high, but let us raise a fund throughout the countryside, and thou, O instructor of the ignorant, shalt purchase this serpent for us, and teach us his habit. We shall then rent him out by the day, buying his food from the common purse."

This was the beginning of the peasants' Co-operative Society.

Meditation and spiritual matters are taught here principally by the example of Tagore, who himself meditates every day at four o'clock in the morning, for four hours. This I believe to be in a large part the answer to the question, "Whence does Tagore derive the power to break all Indian precedent in his institution?"

I knew that Tagore had given the University his own fortune, and I asked my informant how else it was supported. He replied that Tagore collected funds from wealthy Rajahs, going to them and saying with his inimitable manner:

"Give me oil for my lamp."

Against the setting of his Vishwa Bharati, I saw Tagore as though in a nimbus. I stayed with him as long as I could to imbibe the inspiration that had enabled him so to transcend poetry, and many times during my visit I watched him sitting inert like a rock, lost, in his meditation to all consciousness of the outer world. Though I had seen him often in the past, and the striking bearded figure was dear to my memory, I had never been so impressed by his remarkable eyes as here in the midst of his students. The prophets on the banks of the Jordan or the Ganges must have had eyes like Tagore's. When he opened them, it was like the lifting of a curtain on the fifth act of a drama; at once I was in the heart of reality. As we say in the East, "His eyes are fed on the strong secrets of the horizon."

As we talked, he revealed to me a little of the critical attitude toward our country to which I have already alluded. He is known to have spared no man in India, not even Gandhi, though actually he is a friend of the Mahatma's.

"India's old weakness," he said to me, "has been a courtesy which degenerated into servility, but because the West lost its soul by calling us inferiors and coolies, shall we therefore paint ourselves with the same color of arrogance? Why constitute ourselves the judges of Occidental materialism? That is simply to put back the evolution of our own soul. You may remove a thorn from your foot with the aid of a needle, but you cannot remove the curse of nationalism from your brother's soul by transferring it to your own—Néti—not that way, not that way! Not with weapon against weapon—Indian soul-force *versus* British sword-force—but Indian humility and internationalism against the soulless arrogance of Western nationalism. I am sorry I cannot go so far with Mahatma Gandhi as to say that we are Ramas (men Gods) and they Ravanas (monsters)."

"But," I said, "have you forgotten how the West treated you when you renounced your knighthood in protest against the Amritsar atrocities? I know many people who stabbed you in the back at that time."

Perhaps I should digress here to explain that the poet had been the first to protest in those dreadful days and had startled all India from the spell of terror under which Dyer's soldiers had

cast the country, by the single act of the renunciation of his English title. But he had in consequence lost many of his English friends, who had thought him disloyal to the King. I do not refer to politicians, but to English men of letters, who repudiated him when he most needed their kindness, though they have since changed their opinion of the matter.

Perhaps it was this example of narrow patriotism that in part inspired Tagore to found an international University. Patriotism had shut almost all the doors of England in his face: were his eyes thereby opened to its evils?

Though the fact was unknown to the poet at the time, it gives me happiness to remember that Edward Carpenter and George Bernard Shaw stood by him. I myself heard them express their unstinted admiration—I cannot forget how sweet their words sounded to me, a mere spectator of the comedy of Tagore's ostracism, for comic it was, though all the somberness of man's hate and bigotry surrounded the exhibition.

To return to the question I had put to Tagore regarding those who had repudiated him.

He merely smiled and stroked the heavy white locks of his head, closing his eyes, as though trying to remember the forgotten injury. Then his eyelids again lifted like a curtain raised above the

stage, and without regarding me, and as if speaking to himself, he said:

"I cannot notice what they did, I have no time. The Vishwa Bharati needs all my energy; it is the child of my old age."

I hope this great man will forgive my repeating here the intimate talk of a teacher with one unworthy to be his disciple.

At the last day of my stay, when I bade farewell to the poet, he gently lifted me up with his strong hands, and as we gazed profoundly into each others' eyes, he said quietly:

"Come back to us laden with the spiritual wealth of the West. Our soul needs their soul, as they need ours. Humanity is one at the core—East and West are but alternate beats of the same heart. Every beat must be preceded and followed by the other. Therefore, come back, my friend, panoplied with the Soul of the West!"

CHAPTER XV

GHOND THE HUNTER

NOT long after this, I set out to study the rural life of my province.

First of all, I went to the jungle country to visit Ghond, the extraordinary old hunter and trapper, he whom my brother described in the beginning of his story and who had taught me the lore of the forest in my own youth.

Ghond had been the hero of my childhood. He used to nurse my adventurous spirit by taking me at all hours of the night or day, into the dangerous and beautiful jungle, which, had it not been for him, would have remained a sealed book to all of us. Sleeping or waking, he always had weapons in his hand. He coveted a rifle, although it was a matchlock that he carried; he despised the classic weapon in public, and fondled it in private, having been heard to revile it with such names as "frail daughter of mud"—but when alone he cooed to it, "my nurseling from hell."

After I went to America, I had tried to keep up communication with him, but it came to noth-

ing, for Ghond despised reading and writing. To him the pen symbolized decay and death. Now after thirteen years at the thought of seeing him, I felt the same thrill of joy as of old.

His village on the edge of the forest had greatly changed. Where one used to see at least one elephant carrying a load of passengers, one now beheld a second-hand automobile truck. Instead of the odor of elephant dung, one breathed the fumes of oil. In the old days there would be one building of brick among twoscore adobe huts thatched with straw; now there were only ten of those old huts left. It was disheartening.

The square and squat brick structures meant no greater prosperity: they only spelt the invasion into rural India of the newly rich who had made money in the War, and were now lending it to the peasantry.

However, it will be wiser to tell the story of the decline of our village as I heard it from Ghond, for whom I began to look. I stopped at one of the old adobe huts to inquire and I was told that he had moved away from his ancient home and had gone to live in a hut as far as possible from anybody; but I found that the blessed folks of the village knew little more about him than I did myself, and could only direct me to where he lived.

On nearing the place I called to a passer-by,

"Where is Ghond?" The man began to run away. "Why do you run?" I shouted after him.

He answered as he fled, "Ghond is angry today. He will kill thee if. . . ." and his voice trailed in the distance.

In the villages of my country, when you call upon a man, you do not rap, you summon him by your voice; so I shouted through the door of the solitary hut, "Ohai, Ghondji, art thou at home?" Though I waited a while no one answered my call, and I shouted more loudly:

"Art thou home, Ghondji?"

Suddenly, there came an awful sound. "Whoaoom!" roared a tiger from almost under my feet. In the open door of Ghond's hut stood—not a tiger—but a leopard. It opened its mouth and roared at me a second time. I knew now that my end had come; but the brute did not jump, and after an instant I realized that a man stood in the doorway.

"What dost thou here, O brother of folly?" was his greeting. "What is thy unnameable name?"

"There was a chitah," I gasped—"or was I dreaming?"

"She is tied to her chain. But what dost thou here?" he demanded angrily.

The leopard snarled from behind the door.

Ghond turned round and said sharply to her: "Silence, thou sister of a sheep."

Then as he looked again at me, I said, "Dost thou not recognize thy old friend and pupil, my Ghond?"

"Have I the misfortune to be blind—so blind as not to recognize an old friend?" cried the great, gaunt old man. "Hoa—ho, it is not thou, my son? Why, it seems like a miracle that thou art here! To think that I was about to let loose that cat of mine upon thee! Poor mouse of a boy, let me embrace thee!" and he enveloped me like a bear.

We heard the "cat," as Ghond called her, growl at us as she tugged at her chain behind the closed door.

"She is jealous. Let me bring her out so that she can share our talk." So Ghond went in, and in a few moments he came back leading the leopard by her chain. She eyed me suspiciously for a moment, then sprawled on the ground tame as a dog; but I noticed that Ghond took care to sit between her and me. As she lay there, she measured about five feet, not including the tail.

"Tell me about her," I demanded.

"I brought her to my hut after I had cursed her mother to death."

"Oh, no! It is impossible!" said I.

"'Tis true. It was a necessity, for I had no weapon with me," answered the artless Ghond.

"Thou hadst been drinking."

"Drinking!" exclaimed Ghond indignantly. "What sayest thou? Dost thou think a man who deals with tigers and chitahs can afford to touch anything but water? Of course, that night we were returning from a wedding, no doubt we were a bit merry and had forgotten our respect for the jungle. We walked and sang like donkeys giving a concert from door to door; then suddenly we heard the old woman roar."

"What didst thou do then?" I inquired, eager for the story.

"Well, when I realized how it was, I shouted to my fellow travelers to take to the nearest tree. They had not waited for my advice; they had already done so; I heard them cry, 'Ghond, thou deaf, dumb, and blind! thou thousand-fold imbecile! The animal is behind thee!'

"I turned around to learn exactly where she was. At first I saw nothing, then suddenly something flashed a pair of green lights at me. I felt that my end was very near. I could not tell which way she was coming; at the same time those tree-climbing asses, my friends, were shouting at me, which sorely distressed and puzzled me. I began to walk backwards as fast as I could. Suddenly,

I collided against a tree and stopped; at that instant a pair of green eyes, like two burning emeralds, arrested my gaze.

"I had no time to enjoy their beauty and I ran behind the tree. I looked about in frantic search. Lo! there between a fork of the tree, just under my chin, her green eyes blazed like a sea on fire. That made me angry; in my rage I swore at her, calling her a goat, a camel, a sewer-rat, and brother of a mangy cur. At that last remark she flew at me like a thunderbolt. A shaft of moonlight glinted on the gold of her skin as she rose to the zenith of her leap. I took the name of God, and ducked; she went through the forking of the tree about two feet over my head; I saw her fall within a dozen feet of me. I rushed to the other side of the tree. Again I looked through the narrow forking of the branches; there she was crouching, her head dripping with moonlight. Had she not insisted on eating me, I should have loved the creature, she looked so beautiful; as it was, I started to climb the tree. Just then she gave such a soul-shaking roar that I realized at once that she was going to leap again. I jumped, quick as a squirrel, but hardly had my feet touched the ground when I heard a mewing; I looked down and saw the little one." Ghond stopped a moment and pointed at the chitah by his side. "It

was darting by me to go to its mother, but I caught it by its tail, and lifted it in the air, holding it at arm's length. The little beast began to squeal most mournfully; that roused the mother to such a pitch of frenzy that she yelled to shake the forest. The people hiding in the tree above me screamed in terror, imploring me to let go of the cub, but I would not; I held on to her tail as hard as I could. One more terrible roar and I saw through the limbs of the tree the green eyes rise above the ground as stars shoot in the sky. For a moment there was nothing; then again the green rockets like streaming flames bore down upon me. I shut my eyes and cursed her with all the power of my soul; I could hear my voice above her snarl. I waited—oh, so long—for the fatal stroke of her paw. Nothing happened. I waited, till unable to bear it any longer I opened my eyes and saw a strange sight. Behold, the old woman was lying in the fork of the tree, her middle caught as if in a vise between the branches. She had miscalculated her leap, and instead of falling on me she had fallen into the cleft of the tree with all her strength and weight, and this had trapped her fatally. She growled to freeze one's heart; but suddenly her tone changed, she began to wail for help. The anguish that rang out through her call made every leaf tremble with pain. It wrung

my heart, so I drew near her in order to console her, but suddenly she shot out a paw and almost scratched off my nose. I swore at her again—told her what a soulless daughter of shame she was. Now she made a desperate effort to free herself from the fork and jump at me. That drove me into a rage of terror—I hit her on the head with my cudgel; I went on hitting and swearing until I was drenched with her blood which spurted into my face so that I could not see anything. At last, when I came to my senses, and my frenzy had passed, I saw that she was lying still in the forking, and a black liquid was streaming down her stiff front legs. The poor woman was dead.

"There was nothing else for me to do but to go up a neighboring tree and converse with my friends while we waited for the break of day. When we got down from our perch we discovered that she was not a tigress, but a chitah about seven feet beside the tail." Here Ghond paused to stretch himself.

"Where was the cub all this time?" I asked.

"She was hiding in the undergrowth near the tree. I heard her cry for her mother. It took me a very short time to trap her."

"But thou didst really kill the mother with thy stick and not with thy cursing." I was still incredulous.

"No, no," Ghond protested. "My curse did it. Nothing but that curse that scorched my own soul could have pinned her between the hard limbs of the tree. It is evident thou dost not know what a whole-hearted curse can do.

"I left my friends to their flaying of the old woman, and came home with my adopted daughter, this pet. She has been brought up like a high-caste lady—a strict vegetarian. You can tell it by the odor of her body—she does not reek with the fragrance that meat-eating creatures are cursed with. This cat has no stink. She is every bit a lady."

After that first interview I went to see Ghond a number of times. We also took a few walks in the forests where the game is getting scarcer.

"Now, behold," said he, "thou and I are where the heart of the jungle used to be. Alas, at present it is but the sole of the jungle's feet; the brothers are far away. The rail drove them hence.

"Next came the rich money-lenders with those wind-chariots (automobiles)—a smell, a noise, a squirt of evil odor! No decent jungle beast will stand that. Oh, there is no end to the iniquity of this age! If only that soul of lunacy, the fire-chariot, had not descended upon the country! Its path lay across old drainage and ancient systems

of sewerage that kept the land dry, and it broke them up and blocked every other passage of the waters and roadways of the animals; thus the waters stood still and thou knowest the law of the forest—the water that is still hatches the vulture of fever. The fire-chariot brought Kalajara—Malaria—to the country. After its coming the river had to change its course. Poor Mother Water—she could not stand the insolence of that puffing and howling folly.

"Now that the breasts of the river are dried, our brothers the animals do not come near the villages. I have to travel five *kos* (ten miles) to hunt even a mangy wild dog. Calamity upon calamity! I am getting old; the sap is turning into gravel inside of me. No, brother, the golden age of hunting is over; and when the animals begin their exodus it is the prelude to the departure of the gods; what will happen to this land now that the gods are going?"

By this time we had reached the very dark places where the jungle ceased to look green: it was green-black—fierce, somber, and indifferent. In the old days, one had to tread stealthily here, but now we were holding a conversation at the top of our voices.

Suddenly, however, Ghond exclaimed, "Look, look!" I looked and saw nothing. He put his

hand on the back of my head, then turned it in the right direction; even then I saw nothing. It took me a long time—long in Ghond's estimation—to discern a big bison behind a tree. He was blacker than the forest, it seemed; his silken coat shone like some black gem. He had not yet gotten the scent of our presence. We saw his stately rump, his knife-like horns flashing in and out of sight, and once in a while a glimpse of his neck and muzzle made one shiver with a sense of beauty and danger. A bison in a zoo is a different creature. How ugly this one would have looked in captivity, but here in his own world he was as beauty's self!

Ghond and I were by now on the lowest branch of a sal tree—about eight feet above the ground where we could see the bison below us, more silken and blacker than ever; here and there a twig moved as it touched his body; the plants that brushed his flanks trembled as he slowly passed by.

Now we could see all of him; he was about ten feet long from nose to the beginning of his tail, with skin moderately hairy and horns about two feet long.

I whispered to Ghond, "Why didn't he hear us coming?" Ghond whispered back, "The wind was against, not with us."

Grunt, grunt, grunt came from another direction. The old fellow stood still, raised his head, then sniffed the air; then slowly hoofed the ground. Grunt, grunt, grunt again, much nearer. He sniffed the air anew and gave a quiet little bellow—Oh-mo! Then behold, the old lady and the youngling hove in sight; the boy, hardly four feet long, came first; he looked like any sturdy black calf, but she who followed was immense; her horns were negligible, but her coat was more shiny and smoother than her husband's. From her mouth hung a sprig, green and wet, and she walked—as a Roman matron would have walked. The male of the species went obediently to her and rubbed his horn caressingly against her neck. The boy had already vanished out of sight from a sense of decency, it seemed—he knew that the old man was going to apologize to Mother for running away on his own, and neglecting to protect his family.

The old lady proved adamantine; she would give no response to her husband's caress. He tried another tack—put his chin on her neck; even then—no response. Suddenly, he lifted his head higher, then sniffing the air very carefully and as if he had scented danger, he bellowed; the son bo'ed from behind a thicket, then ran back posthaste to Father and Mother. The old man eyed

him angrily, but seemed to relent after a few seconds and licked the boy's face affectionately. This melted the mother's heart! What an idyll followed!

After the bison family had gone as quietly as they had come, we descended from our perch and went back to the village.

Ghond fed his cat, as he called the pet leopard, and put her to bed. It was a long ritual of petting and patting.

Again to hear the cowherd's flute calling to the cows to come home at sundown was a delight. They came and went by Ghond's hut, all unconscious of the leopard indoors. The cowdust hour, as the evening is called, floated after the trail left behind by the animals; it came with gold and saffron throbs; the odor of smoke given out by the burning of the cow-dung cakes rose from the different ovens of the huts; the stars swam into the blue-black sky; the bells rang out at the other end of the temple, calling the faithful's attention to the coming of Night. Hardly had the evening hush shut down on the land than the spell was broken by hooting and honking.

Ghond, who was eating supper with me under the starry sky, swore at the pest: "Harlot of the road! She passes thus to attract attention."

"Ghond," I asked, "how came these rich people hither with their cars?"

Ghond gulped down a cup of cocoanut milk from his earthen cup which he used to compare to a maiden's face, then wiped his mouth with the back of his hand and stared at me silently for a while. As if he spoke reluctantly, he said:

"The curse descended on this land when the Pultan (army) was called out. First came the Pultan. Then up went the price of grain. Then appeared the money-lender on the scene. Kings fight and grain fields pay. The fool waits for the sea of trouble to subside ere he plunges into business; not so the money-lender; he turns the current of trouble into rivers of profit. Thus they came, and with them men pulling chains who surveyed all this land; to all the tillers of soil they paid four times the price of grain two years in advance. They killed the holdings of almost all the families; there is none hereabouts who does not owe money to the vultures of lending. Those houses that stood along the red road on which the state sends its mail, its army, and its magistrates, they took from the tillers and pulled down, and now the straw roofs no longer curve upon the adobe walls, as curves the hump on a yellow Shiva bull, and there are no more brown walls. Behold the whole roadside is pockmarked with brick houses, square and rigid as the soul of the money-leech that dwells therein. Rama, Rama—what a calamity!"

"But Ghond, where are the old fellows gone," said I—"Haru the milkman, Nunda the barber, Kanai the oil presser, Apsara the barber's wife, who manicured the women, all—all—where are they?"

"They sold their lands to the money-changers, then went to the city to labor in mills. Those that are left—the canny Kisto miser and knave, the slavish Janardan family, and the dreamy old priest who worships his God—they owe so much money that they cannot leave—they abide. Loafers and transient laborers come with the seasons to work the land for the money-lenders; once the season is over, they depart as the birds—it is a pity God has not given them feathers! They are all chicken-hearted—they fear my little cat as they fear death. Money and cowardice are blood-brothers! I abide here because my business does not depend on the money-lender; I catch and train animals, or kill and sell their skins; I owe no one much money. On the red road come dealers to buy my goods who go away when that is done. No one can come near me for that cat frightens all. Rama help us to die soon so that we will not have to see the bitter end of this curse that the War let loose upon our land!"

"Ghond," I said, "we are passing from feudalism into capitalism, from the pastoral to the

mechanical, from hand-loom to power-loom, from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, and from the cottage to the factory. India is on the march."

Ghond grunted, "I spit on it three times!"

Seeing that he was not in a receptive frame of mind, I bade him good night.

I wandered far and wide into the country, in order to study conditions and I concluded that I was right—the industrial revolution is under way in India. The change from the eighteenth to the twentieth century is going on everywhere—in some places very rapidly and in some others in a sluggish manner.

Tagore's University, where the thing is happening rapidly, is characteristic. It has an agricultural department that has succeeded in introducing scientific agriculture not only among the sons of the landed gentry that study here, but among the peasants of the countryside through University Extension work. That a poet could perceive and put into practice agrarian co-operation and modern methods of tilling, sowing, and reaping, is an amazing revelation, but Tagore is like all our old poets—true to the facts of nature.

And there is my brother's co-operative farming which has succeeded eminently among a group of peasant proprietors. Co-operative banking and

co-operative scientific farming are coming to be the order of the day. This is one way—perhaps the best way—in which India is traveling from the eighteenth to the twentieth century.

But the universal way in which she is being driven to join the van of "Progress" is by canny landlordism on the one side that drives the small proprietor from the field to the factory, and the total collapse of the old system of domestic industry on the other. Whether Gandhism will succeed in reinstating the cottage by bringing electric power to the doors of the peasant, remains to be seen, but in the meantime, hamlet after hamlet is being sucked empty of its inhabitants. All are being driven like coolies into the modern centers of industry. If bringing the best and the most beneficent essence of power from factories to the cottage does not come as the Gandhimen dream, the exodus from heavily mortgaged lands of large groups of peasantry will grow larger and larger till their number wrecks the very factories that called them. That the industrial revolution may turn into a ghastly social revolution is not a remote possibility in India and the rest of the East.

And if this thing comes those who will be blamed the most are not only the British but also the Indian bankers, landlords, and princes. My judgment is that the rich Indian is more of an enemy to his poorer countrymen than he realizes.

The next day Ghond and I called on the priest of the village. The temple was a small stone shrine that rose like a gray ant-hill on the edge of the verdant fields where peasants were at work. I saluted the priest who stood on the stone porch of his temple, but as I was going to take the dust from his feet, he said, "No, no—I am not the head here; the God is supreme, salute him! Hast thou forgotten all decencies of behavior in course of thy sojourn in a far country?"

The old man nodded his shaven head, round and smooth as a door knob. He had a large straight nose, almost Semitic, smooth-shaven face of no distinction, and gimlet-holes for eyes, where gleamed small eyeballs like those of a mongoose. Then he turned to Ghond who saluted neither him nor his God.

"How is thy pet cat, Ghond?"

"Vegetarian and pious as thou art, priest," in answer Ghond grunted out.

"Be seated, both of you," said the priest ignoring Ghond. "Under the shadow of the spire—there . . . art thou at ease? Then let us make talk until the hour for the next ritual strikes. The God is resting now."

"Fill the lad's ears with tales of woe!" said Ghond to the priest in a surly tone. "The old village and the new, the rich and the poor; the air-chariot, all the curses of all kinds—railroad,

malaria—load him up with them till they break his back; don't pour unction and pestiferous sweet priest-talk on him as if he were an ant!"

"*Sabash,* Ghond! (Bravo, and silence, Ghond.) Let me talk what the spade of my tongue digs out of the mine of my feeling—gold or copper." Then the priest turned his mongoose eyes on me and asked, "In those far lands where they eat beef, drink wine, and shoot one another, what do they think of our Gandhi?"

I said, "My Lord, I have heard naught but praise of Gandhi in that country where houses are tall as the sky."

"Make talk, priest," interrupted Ghond, "that I can understand. What care I whether those dwellers in tall houses across the sea drink or shoot one another, when these money-lenders are eating us up as toads eat up insects?"

After eyeing him in silent disgust for several moments, the priest turned to me and said, "The rich are buying up the countryside, my son. They do not make offerings to this temple, they do not come to the plays we give here; they go to see a clown like Chaplin that does shadow-light gestures in the night."

"What do you mean? Charlie Chaplin here?" I asked in amazement. "My Lord, have you seen the cinema?"

"Has he?" roared Ghond. "Last year I saw him laugh at that clown's movements so that he beat his own belly with his hands instead of clapping—he forgot where to strike."

"Ghond," rejoined the priest, "I beat upon my belly in order to keep it from shaking in vulgar mirth as thine did; after all, I am a Brahmin!"

"But I have no belly as vast as thine, priest," retorted the incorrigible Ghond. "I clapped my hands until they ached as my soul did with an agony of laughter."

"The new rich, my son," resumed the priest, "never come to our festivals. In their marriage ceremonies they give no plays of old. They showed us this Chaplin instead, who pranced about on a piece of linen last year when Jahordas's daughter was given in marriage."

"We laughed our bellyful," admitted old Ghond.

"But think of the old mystery play of Rama," resumed the priest. "Is it not a longer piece? Does not the play last twelve hours? Compare that with this lewd Westerner Chaplin; he did not last more than an hour. Is he a better jester than the fellow that plays the monkey in the Ramalila masque? Nay, but since that epic play is not patronized by the rich the players are giving it up. Some have sold their masks two hundred

years old in order to pay railroad fare to the nearest factory town. All the ancient robes of gold, violet, red, and azure are being sold by their owners who have played the mystery plays generation after generation. The temple is losing revenue; the rich worship their success; they do not need my old God, friend of the field and forest, bringer of rain and abundant harvest. Some day I shall be forced by poverty to chant a prayer and throw him into the river. The Gods die last, but once dead they never return. I pray for Vishnu to incarnate again, as is promised, and put an end to this black age."

"What incarnation are you expecting, my Lord?"

"The last, my son," the priest rejoined. "It is prophesied in the Purana that when 'the Earth is bound by iron chains'—it is so bound by the railways—'when men speak to each other across infinite spaces, and when materialism reigns supreme, in that age He will reincarnate as Kalki the Slayer and sustainer. Then shall pass the kingdom of trade, and the brotherhood of the Sudra (the toilers) shall commence.' That is the prophecy, my son. I am not troubled. I know Vishnu will come on his white charger and lay low the rich, as he laid low the knights of war before them, and before them the Brahmins. At

first the Brahmins ruled the earth, but they betrayed Truth and Righteousness, so they had to pass under the sword of calamity. After the priest came the warriors; they too sinned and had to pass. Now the trader rules the earth, but he has already sinned more heavily than his soul can bear, so it is high time that the sword of calamity should smite him down and give the earth over to the rule of the toiler Sudra. I await the last coming of Vishnu, as befits a priest. *Hari Om, Hari Om!* The hour has struck when I must perform the next ritual; stay ye here and have the consecrated food for your midday meal."

The priest went into the shrine to his sacred duties while we stayed outside keeping within the shadow of the spire.

"Thou hast heard it now; though the priest is a fool, he is no liar," expatiated Ghond. "The calamity is upon us. These new rich people are the scourge of the land. As the priest says, he may have to bury his God."

"But Ghond," I remarked, "this is the industrial revolution. It happened in other lands, wiping away Gods, arts, and villages. No one can stop it."

"I spit upon it," Ghond growled. "I spit upon it three times."

At midday the priest brought out three trays

of rice and curry from his home adjoining the temple, and offered them to the God. The God every day has three meals: breakfast, luncheon, and dinner; at these hours, the priests bring fitting offerings to their deity; in the morning at seven o'clock fruits and sweetmeats, at noon rice and curry, and at seven in the evening bread fried in ghee (clarified butter), curry, and sweetmeats.

This noon after the usual interval, in which time about a dozen or more men, women, and beggars had gathered on the temple porch, the priest opened the shrine doors and entered to bring out the undiminished quantities of rice and curry.

Here I asked, "If the God eats of the rice and curry, dear Ghond, why does its quantity remain the same?"

He answered, "Gods are not men—they inhale only the fragrance of food; that fills their bellies to bursting."

The priest distributed some of the food to four common beggars, and one destitute old villager who once had money and youth; then he invited us to go to his home and dine there.

So Ghond and I followed him into the adjoining house. There the priest's daughter, a girl of fourteen or fifteen, poured water out of a brass pitcher over our hands and feet. After we had

cleansed ourselves she gave us one towel, a corner of which I used, and passed on to Ghond.

It was a large old-time mud-walled house. In the center was a square patch of garden where the priest grew all manner of flowers and vegetables; between the garden and the rooms was a high porch of mud on which we were bidden to sit. The house was spacious, a hollow-square of rooms whose front doors gave on the porch and whose windows looked on the world outside. The straw thatch awning over the porches was held up by pillars of bamboo around which climbed tendrils and vines covering with green vegetation the roof which fulfilled a two-fold purpose, namely, to keep the rooms and the porch cool, and give the vines more space and sun to grow in.

The priest's wife, a woman about forty, dressed in a red-bordered sari, sat near us and plied me with all kinds of questions, while her husband and daughter served us. As soon as I had an opportunity I asked:

"Why haven't you married your daughter to someone yet?"

She answered, "We are not betrothing our girls as early as we used to. It is a new age; everything is different from my time. When I was her age I came to keep house with my hus-

band; my first-born came to the world when I was sixteen, but it is all different now. She, my daughter, is nearly fifteen, she does not yet know what it will be like to be married. The really dark age is upon us; our ancestors' ways are being swept out of existence as dust from a doorstep: my husband says that this is fulfilling a prophecy, but I find it hard."

"How do you like the wives of the new rich who are buying up everything here?" I asked.

"They have no shame," she said. "They do not wear conch-shell bracelets; they wear *billaur* (Western glass bangles.) They eat too much, they talk all the time, louder than the parrots in their homes; they have no caste: they are the ones who will be swept away as soon as the time is opportune. They have no God. Now, just as the poor were on the verge of following in the footsteps of these indecent rich, behold God sent Gandhi to us. Gandhi says that we must abolish caste, not because of our insolence, but because the age of the Toilers' Rule, Kali Yuga, as was prophesied, is at hand. The rich trader (Vaisya), the prophecy says, shall be smoked out of existence as the bees from a honeycomb and the sweetness of the world shall pass under the governance of the 'lowest of the low and of those who are lost altogether and—holy.' "

"He," commented the priest's wife, meaning her husband, "finds great peace in contemplating the oncoming calamity."

Ghond said very sweetly, "When the jungle beasts become boisterous below, the crow from his nest prophesies forest-fire."

The priest answered, "And the crow is right."

"Yea—that is the only virtue that redeems the crow!" mumbled Ghond.

"Then, Mother," I put my last question to the lady of the house, "you agree with your husband that the calamity is upon us?"

"Yea, my son. Even so I find no peace. Women teach their daughters no Sanskrit prayers, but horrible evil-sounding Angrezi (English), thinking that in that language there is more chance of making a good fortune. They do not meditate half as much as we used to. God is going out of our thoughts, and respect for the life of poverty. How many are there to-day that respect a Brahmin? None! Why? Because the Brahmin is poor, and yet the truth is that the taste of peace lies in the bread of poverty. We were a purer race when poor Brahmins were the lords of all castes. Now all that is gone; everywhere envy of others and love of prosperity goad men and women to live. I am glad I was born in an age when Sanskrit prayers rose from women's lips

to their God, and our mouths were unsullied by hard foreign speech that reeks of desire and ill-breeding."

Our meal was over. Ghond was getting ready to leave his grass-matting seat. But the priest stayed him with these words: "Let me see if thou hast had the three things that a host must give his guest to eat—the pleasure of the teeth, and of the tongue, and of the gullet? Ha, daughter, we forgot the sherbet liquid, a specialty that the child makes out of melon, rose-leaves, and other things. Bring it forth, daughter."

Before I left the village, I had seen almost all the old families that had not yet left for Calcutta. They talked of two things only: the cost of living and the difficulty of earning a livelihood. "No man can be noble-spirited on an empty stomach," they said. It was most depressing to hear them; even the young spoke in the same way. "Our belly-fire burns so that the business of getting food has driven God out of our thought and song out of our hearts. Brother, when the field you are walking on is mortgaged, how can you sing as you sow and reap? The other man is closing in upon us with his demons of gold and silver. There is no God—unless he too be a money-coiner; there is no God for the poor!"

The factory hands in the most squalid homes were happier than the peasantry; they, at least,

could go on strike, but these poor peasants had no relief from their toil. Truly speaking, I could not bear what I saw and heard, so I decided to leave.

My last hour in the village, I spent in the company of Ghond. His cat was tied to her halter indoors, and we sat out under the Pipal tree in front of the house and gazed at the toilers in the far fields. The grain was already beginning to turn yellow; here and there, a brown body, ill-clad and emaciated, showed in sad contrast against the fat and ripening rice fields; beyond them gleamed the jungle—a wall of compact and imperious green on which the morning sun showered his arrows of fire. It was hot and humid everywhere that August day, and early though it was, the few shops were open for business on the main road where now and then a motor puffed up or down, and multitudes of crows cawed on the housetops, while the kites—numerous too—cried shrilly from sky to sky.

Ghond's eyes were tranquil and keen as before. He was seeing and observing everything. This morning, every feature of his face wore the likeness to an old hoary-headed hawk and nothing escaped his sharp gaze.

At last he spoke. "Little one, now that thou hast seen thy brother's face, thou wilt return to that far-away land where houses are taller than

the stars. I am old; I know the cat will kill me some of these days and eat my bones—all that is left of me now."

"But why must thou submit thyself to such a fate, Ghond?" I exclaimed, while from within the house came the sound of a rubbing chain as the leopard pulled restlessly on her leash.

"Little one, I must pay to the jungle what I took from it," replied Ghond seriously, "and a cat won't eat a man already dead, so she will have to kill me herself in order to dine upon me. It is the curse of cats, big or small, that they won't eat what they have not killed themselves."

"That is good observation," said I, "but wherefore desire such an end?"

"Thou must understand," he explained, "that I have only one life to give for so many lives that I have taken, and, moreover, I must consider the religion of the cat."

"What, Ghond?" I asked in stupefaction. "Religion of a cat!"

He answered quietly, his eyes resting on my face as a bough hangs over a brook: "A tiger's religion is to be a meat-eater; God makes him that—yet look now, I have not taught that cat to eat meat! What if thy mother on her deathbed had left thee in my care, would I not have raised thee as a Brahmin with all a Brahmin's defects as well as his virtues? But that girl was

left to me to bring up as a leopard, and I have given her the education of a dog; what an insult to heap upon a cat!"

I was too astonished to reply, and the extraordinary old man continued, "She must be taught to fight, kill, and eat what her mother ate. Yesterday, since thou camest not to visit me, I took her to the forest and spent all day there; I unleashed her."

"Ghond!" I exclaimed.

"Yea, I did so, and she killed a rabbit," he answered proudly. "The old harlot learned to snare the young dandy. To-morrow we go for a week's hunt; don't be dismayed; old Ghond will die as he has lived, a hunter; not mortgaging my house to the money-changer and taking employ in his stable where the evil-smelling machine abides—no, never that! I shall go to the stealthy places where the darkness is thick as a bear's coat and on rainy days it rubs its wet hide against you as might a black panther: there shall I live and hunt till the falconer of Silence takes me up in his talons and finishes this mistake of God's."

"Ghond, thou art mad," I protested.

"I must be. Listen, dost hear the cat growl yonder? I will bring her out; she needs the air."

So he brought out the leopard, holding her by the chain. She came and crouched by me like a hound; I touched her skin with my hand. Ghond,

standing behind her, the end of the chain in hand, grumbled to himself.

His last exhortation was, "Remember, unto each one his own religion: a cat must kill, a man must find God."

As I went toward my lodging where the ox-cart was waiting for me, I took a last look at the old village from which almost all of us had moved away. Yes, the lands were passing from small proprietorships to large holdings; the emaciated men and women bending, bending, bending, would be better off to sell out now and go, before inevitable catastrophe drove them to the city. But I knew that, to the end, they would hold to the soil of their ancestors, and only the last extremity would drive them to the factories of Calcutta.

The fat grain turning golden smiled in the sun; the lean toilers went on bending their backs as if in unconscious supplication to fate, while the jungle beyond gleamed fiercely green, waiting for that day when the race of man is beaten and broken by the momentum of its own avarice; then the trees will grow and wipe away that village and the grain fields, as the Ganges takes all before her in flood-time. Yes, the jungle is India; it owned all India once, and it will own all India again when man's own greed will have devoured him.

CHAPTER XVI

THE THUNDERBOLT

ON my return to town, my brother and Nilu met me at the station, and we motored to our house in the suburb of the Greater Calcutta, as it is called. We had hot discussions all the way, which we continued even after our arrival, and until the evening meditation in the temple silenced us. I urged Nilu to spend the night with us. He, that round-eyed sweet child of Fortune, and my brother, the most rugged-minded of men, differed fiercely. As for myself, I nearly devoured Nilu with my denunciation of the modern barbarism of machinery. Our tirades against one another rang out in all the languages, including French, in which my brother was proficient.

We sat on the bank of the Ganges and talked, and as the day was drawing to its close, Nilu offered his final attack on our medievalism.

"What has ancient piety done for India? It has kept the country absolutely self-hypnotized; we feel ourselves to be the greatest religious race on earth; our arrogance is supreme."

His large, prominent eyes seemed to grow more outward-gazing as the golden light of the sun deepened into saffron in his face. He gesticulated freely and plunged into English with apparent unconsciousness. "We, the spiritually proud," he cried, "raise our eyes to heaven while the European humbles us, treading upon our faces that are upturned to God—a fine kind of deity who does not come to the rescue of his votary! Away with that stupidity! Let us make a God of the applied sciences; let us build industries more efficient than the European, till European capital and European masters of industry, finding competition impossible, flee from India. Gandhi is all right as the last grand gesture of India's Middle Ages, but he has nothing to do with her future."

"But Nilu," my brother said, "you are not India. You are European; probably I am too. India is the peasantry: eighty per cent of our people live on the soil; it is they who have the Indian soul. The peasant, the true son of our Mother, needs no industrialism; what he needs is more and freer irrigation, fewer steam engines and railroads, and more electric power brought to his door. You are talking not about him, but about yourself; and in the presence of his royal destitution, who are you? What you desire is to obliterate all that the foreigner points to as the

mark of your inferiority to himself, and you are childish enough to believe in his pompous, frothy judgment!"

Nilu thundered: "India will be better off under our guidance than under yours." His child's face grew hard with determination. "We shall clothe and feed the peasants; the European only exploits them, but we, the Indian captains of finance, will make them rich. Science has come to stay; the modern factory system is rooted to this soil by now as is the banyan tree, notwithstanding Gandhi! Since it is here, let us use it as a lever against the European, and you will see if we do not treat our countrymen better than he does.

"Nilu," I said, "in this country, as you saw that night at the play, as you will see to-night in our temple, in this country only the common people have any soul, and yet your beloved crew of manufacturers want to murder it.

"We have never had any animus against foreign robbers—from Alexander the Great on, but we have a real horror of the nineteenth-century European methods of plundering Asia through industrialism. That you, our own flesh and blood, should take up the job of industrializing the country, is too much. Indians do not object to foreigners, but our very best men—Tagore, Gandhi, Dayanand, Tilak, Vivekananda, and Shree Rama

Krishna, all repudiate the industrial West. Vivekananda and Gandhi traveled much and knew the West at first hand, yet they shed every touch of it, and what our best Hindu men and women fear as a scourge, may perhaps be harmful, not only to us, but to all mankind."

"But," Nilu retorted, "the twentieth century is here; if we do not assimilate it, it will wipe us out. I fear the viper of industrialism in my soul, but you know that if you have a tame snake in the house, it will keep other snakes from coming near it, so I consider acquiring riches a religious duty. A man who is poor has no right to exist, he is the enemy of India."

"To put out a fire, you do not pour melted butter on it!" I cried. "To save India's soul from burning to death in soulless materialism, you must not acquire more material power; her cure does not lie that way: it lies in the direction Gandhi has pointed out—absolute purity of life and living. I believe in his insistence on purification of the heart of the country through non-violence, prayer, and fasting. The guilt of our misery lies heavy on all of us; if the wealth-bound and power-blind continue on their ruinous path, it is not they who are guilty of sin; it is that we have not yet become pure enough to help them."

I quoted: " 'Though thy path is keen as the

edge of a razor, O soul—acrobat of the Infinite —thou canst walk on it as the Sun upon the jagged sharpness of the hills.' "

When I finished my harangue, I found it was past sunset, and that I, the champion of India's soul, was almost talking the hour of meditation out of existence. In the semi-darkness, I looked at my brother; he was sitting still, his gaze fixed all this time on the river where beauty had been passing and repassing before us. We maintained silence now, until we heard the conch-shell blown by the priest in our temple, announcing the end of the hour of sanctity.

Then we made our way back to the house, where our sister gave us supper, after which we went to the temple to listen to the Reader read and explain the scriptures. In India, for more than 2500 years, these men, best described as holy minstrels, have come at the same hour every day to read and interpret the sacred books, the only way of teaching them to the people, very few of whom can read; moreover, this observance is the greatest diversion, the moving picture of the East, to which they come for all the drama, all the entertainment of their lives.

The temple, as I have said, was about four stories high, but only its first and second floors were in use; on the second was the shrine of

Krishna, about fifty or sixty feet square, and around it was a porch eight feet broad where the congregation sat and could see the holy of holies through the four very tall folding doors that were open.

This evening, inside the shrine, burned a dozen brass candelabra; their vivid light fell through the open doors on the audience and the Reader, who were all congregated on the north porch. About forty people, mostly women, were huddled together facing the Minstrel who sat at the end of the porch with the Mahabharata spread before him on a little stool; near him burned a candelbrum of six wicks. He opened the reading by casting a glance at the low, starry sky on his left.

"These strophes of silver—the sun, moon, and stars—mark the transitoriness of man's life. Therefore, O ye, doomed to death, listen to the tales and prayers of the scriptures in order to find therein the Key of Truth with which you shall unlock the door of Death and enter the secret passage of Immortality!"

Then the reading began. Most of the episodes he had by heart, the casual glance at the book here and there was to stimulate and correct his memory.

The man was a real actor, with his hawk's nose, his wolf's brown-yellow eyes, and his large mouth,

out of which issued a voice that had, I imagined, at least two more octaves than most men's range of utterance. Now and then he would raise his long arms out of his tunic and his voice would soar up note after note into a cry eerie and unreal. From the earth deities to the heavenly ones he ascended, then down again to the beds of the sea, for his subject was the battle of the Titans and the Gods. At one end of his gamut was the hoof-beat and cries of the hordes led by Shiva, like Dionysus, and at the other were Indra-Zeus —and the denizens of the sky.

We were all held spellbound as he dethroned the Gods and peopled Swarga (Olympus) with the victorious Titans. Though he was following the text before him carefully, he did not hesitate to inject into it any appropriate episode of the day, nor did he have any scruple against pouring into the stream of his narration a shower of jokes of his own making. It was now clear to me why the epics and scriptures have never ceased to be alive to the common people. This Minstrel reader was explaining to them through the pretext of the Mahabharata their own life-story in terms of their own hopes and despairs. Thus the great epics suffer no mortality.

The Titans ruled Heaven, and the Gods in their defeat meditated on the ways and means of

winning back their rightful home. At last, Indra, the leader, spoke, saying, "We must forge a thunderbolt with which to reconquer Heaven and from the ultimate Absolute God who takes no side in this quarrel, I learn that the rib of a selfless creature alone can form that thunderbolt."

Well, the Gods are not selfless, nor the Titans; both are chained to the law of Will, wanting something for themselves, so the Gods turned to man, who is both Titan and God and more. But even among men, a selfless man, such as our Gandhi, is rare. The Gods sought him in palaces; there were only monkeys appearing as men. They sought for the selfless one in the army; there they found only rivers of red. They searched among the homeless; they were eaten with desire. At last, in despair, they looked at an old man who had lived a family life all his days, and now, in his seventieth year, meditated upon Truth. The Gods see into souls, and the moment they discovered this man they knew he was selfless—like unto Mahatma Gandhi. He never used the word thine or mine—but always said "here" for earth, "there" for God. So the Gods asked him for his ribs. He replied that he did not know whether "here" or "there" were "ribs" or "not ribs." "Take what you need, gentlemen," he said (as Gandhi does here and now, O my listeners!).

"So the Gods took Dadhichi's ribs—they were not his, for he was selfless; and suddenly in their hands they became an endless number of thunderbolts. Now the Gods joined battle with the Titans and slew them all, and lo! the Gods rule in Swarga (Heaven), but it was not they who won that battle, but the mere bones of a selfless man! Man is greater than Gods and Titans: from his selflessness springs the victorious Truth. Now that we have Gandhi, one selfless man in all Hindustan, Truth is assured of triumph!

"O my listeners, those silver strophes that mark the transitoriness of man's life, day and night, the sun and the moon, are they to vanquish you? Or are you to vanquish them? Will you be the thunderbolt of immortality for which the Gods search to-day—that bolt which will destroy death, pulverize Time, and bring about the day that needs no sun, nor moon, nor the dance of the stars?"

The reading was over, and we put on a plate each his offering to the reader, and took our leave.

Nilu, our captain of industry said in English, "By Jove, this explains how Gandhism has spread through the country."

My brother replied, "Our Minstrels make the epics grow from day to day. In another hundred years, Gandhi will be an organic part of these never-dying stories."

"Nilu," I said, "you live in the city of the

rich, you do not know how the poor live. Think of to-night and the night at the Opera; is there any comparison?"

"Bosh!" he replied. "If we do not become rich, the Europeans will, at our cost. These epics must wait till we all become rich enough to make India Indian."

But my thought returned to the "Forging of the Thunderbolt."

CHAPTER XVII

"THE PATH OF ANCIENT MYSTERY"

THE quest of my brother's face is nothing new. It is the old, age-old search for the happiness that comes in a flash, but abides with us till death, and which perhaps continues beyond that final event of Life.

Who *is* our brother? Is he the man we find, or the man we look for? The sages of the Upanishads have answered that our brother is He who wears the One Face dwelling in the thousand faces of all life.

That Face I have never seen, but as time passes, and as the shadow of age falls across my path, I feel more often in my brother's face that Absoluteness of truth as well as of love, though only for the length of time that a mustard seed may sit steadily upon the horn of a Shiva Bull.

I was thinking of these things a few days later, as I was sitting alone on the porch of the temple. My brother had gone on a short tour of inspection connected with his medical work. Suddenly,

I saw my sister coming toward me holding a telegram. At first I thought it was from him, but when she handed it to me, I saw that it was from Benares, from the Holy One. It said only one word, "Come."

It was not too cryptic to hide from me the final command. Had my brother heard also, I wondered? I must make ready and go at once. The whole world depended on my reaching Benares without delay.

It was hard to say good-bye to my sister, because she asked for nothing. She said, "Live long. Abide in serenity wherever thou art. I shall fast until thy journey's end, and that will purify our hearts and may give thee what thou dost desire. Only the hearts that are pure can attain what they need. Farewell, farewell!" I took a last look at our temple, a glimpse at Shree Krishna's face. . . . "Yes, as long as he sits there, the world will go on," I said to myself. If this religion dies, wherever that Krishna statue goes, a new temple will arise to enshrine him. Gods live long and compel the tribute of time. Farewell, farewell!

I crossed the bridge and drove for the railway station that looks like a palace of crimson. It is an imposing building, but my eyes rested on those wind-blown turquoise sails going up the yellow river, and the bargees that stood upon their oars,

stepping back and forth. It was like seeing the Nile boats four thousand years ago.

I took the first train for Benares and swept through the flat rice fields of Bengal that shook and waved as we passed. The mud huts and their roofs of thatch were of the same model as in the days of Buddha twenty-six centuries ago. Here and there rose red brick buildings, the murderous faces of utility and civilization, for these were rich men's houses, and in front of them, instead of tethered elephants, stood automobiles. *Tehi na divasa gata* (Kalidasa was right): even those wondrous times must pass. I must learn to love automobiles in India.

The train sped on. The huge water tanks of the villages were now surrounded by many people. Women and men were filling their pitchers of brass, gleaming in the afternoon sun; they were taking home their night's supply of Life, as water is sometimes called. The men carried their large pitchers on their heads, while the women held theirs—somewhat smaller—against their right sides, with their right arms encircling the necks of the vessels, their breasts inclining to the left, their left hands hanging to their side straight and nearly stiff—balancing the weight and the curves of the pitcher on the other side. Pure works of art they were come to life, and revealing the most

difficult secrets of motion and movement. The sunlight turned into saffron; the palms shook against the sky like emeralds fringed with amber; while those mud huts afar where the people dwelt waltzed with the sunset. The poet was right when he cried out to the soul of India:

> "Break my heart
> In order to rob me of my doubt.
> Give me power to love thee more."

The train sped on. Darkness descended like a cataract of soot. The day died as suddenly as a candle is blown out. The faithful in my car prayed and meditated in spite of the snatch-and-go rush and noise of the train. Shiva, Shiva, Shiva! The stars came out of the dark above, the fireflies mimicked them from the spaces of jet below. Flocks of moths and insects flew into our car and pounded themselves to death against the electric light. And if the train stopped a while at any station, the *jhillilili* (as we say) rose from a thousand insect voices of the night to a deafening pitch, almost unbearable. No, there was no escape from life—insistent, throbbing, pounding, overpowering life of the tropics!

The train pulled out of the station and plunged into the darkness thick with stars and fireflies. The latter covered the foliage of trees thirty feet high, until they blazed more brightly than any

Christmas tree. No wonder we Hindus are firm believers in immortality. What else could we believe when from every direction Nature presses upon us the quivering and yet choking vastness of life—more and more abundant?

Next morning I got off at Benares and went immediately to bathe in the Ganges. It did not take long, for the ablution in the holy water was a necessary preliminary to visiting the Holy One.

I found my brother at the entrance to the monastery. After I had taken the dust from his feet, he led me within. The Master was lying on his couch, and two monks in yellow were fanning him. Sunlight poured into the room through the open windows. His face was white as a dying man's generally is, and a black beard, of about fifteen days' growth, covered it. His eyes were closed, and his forehead once in a great while contracted momentarily, then grew smooth again with the passing of a paroxysm of pain; but the power was still about him like a garment. He began to speak as if resuming an old familiar conversation.

"My son," he said, almost in a whisper, "as to the eye of the sky, the clouds and stars are in it and yet contain not all of its intangibility, so are the experiences of man. . . . " Then suddenly, in a stronger voice, he commanded me:

"Return to the West! Thy time for peace has

not come. Thou wilt commit some errors yet. Only be pure in spirit—vanity is the worst impurity—and through thy errors thou wilt learn."

He paused, closing his eyes. When he opened them again, they were clear and keen. He said to me:

"India needs love. The West has given her criticism these many years, therefore give the West love, till she learn to love this land of the Sages. I am quite clear in what I am saying: love her, and she will fulfil her destiny. The West still believes that knowledge will give her God: we think that God can be found by Bliss alone. A decade of intense loving will enable her to accomplish a century of God-realization."

"But Holy One," I cried, "I am most pained and bewildered. What of conversion? Shall I go to the West as a missionary of Brahman? Is ours a missionary religion?"

"Thou of thyself canst convert no one, my son," he replied, "for thou art not holy. When a saint converts a man to his eternity, the saint takes the burden of the man's sins upon himself. Therefore, I say to thee, thou mayest not convert, but speak thou of God to anyone who has time to waste."

"Holy One," I exclaimed in amazed awakening, "then vicarious atonement is true?"

"Indeed, my son, only saints may convert others, for when you convert a man you yourself become responsible for him. People should not be converted from one religion to another, but from all religions into the Eternal Religion whose name is Viswarupadarsana—which is, to behold one's Own Self as the self of the past, present, and future of the Universe.

"That last conversion, that supreme realization —the realization of one's own identity with the existing All, is the goal to which little human conversions point. Desire then to convert the human into the divine, the temporal into the timeless, to convert all men not to one religion, but to the essence of all religions! Go, my son, and ask each man to realize that he himself is God.

"Make thy mistakes like a King, my son, but love with all thy heart. Love—love." His voice became fainter. "Go hence now, and look upon thy brother's face!"

He closed his eyes and spoke no more.

We bowed and touched our foreheads to the floor and walked noiselessly out of the Presence.

For three days I did not see the Master again. My heart was heavy. In India when a man dies, we say he is about to start upon the great journey —literally, he makes the supreme change of habitation. "I relinquished my hut to enter my

palace," say the dying. But must I, after knowing the splendor of his presence, remain behind in the darkened and empty hut to wait—for how long? I am not able in words to convey the experience of this man. Sick and fragile as he was, the power of his presence charged the very air we breathed until it lived like an organism to bleed at a touch. How many times I had entered his room to find him, "The Lion," sitting straight on his bed and the people crouched about him on the floor like mice, bowed before his silent power. Once I had been so overcome that seeking where to hide my face, I had buried it in his shoes which were cool, like stone.

I wandered about the monastery distraught, until one of the monks took pity on me and brought me to his room in an effort to divert my mood. The young man had a statue of Buddha which caught my attention. A strange sense of restlessness pervaded it, very foreign to the Master of Peace, and the monk told me its extraordinary story. It seemed that in 1857, during the mutiny, an English officer acquired it from the loot of a temple, and took it back with him to England, where the statue remained in his family for three generations. But during all this time the women of the house were troubled by dreams. Some nights the bronze Buddha came to them in sleep, crying:

"Send me home, send me home! You eat too much meat, you drink too much wine. I am very unhappy. I want to go to my home . . . send me home!"

The matter became an obsession with the women, and at last, when the grandson of the man who had brought the statue to England met one of our disciples in London, a few years ago, he told him the whole story and arranged to have the statue sent back to India.

"But," said my informant, "even after four years the Buddha has not regained his peace. The restlessness of the West still clings about him."

I looked at the young monk in silence, and then bowed my head.

It was the daybreak of my third day in Benares that the Master asked for everyone to be present. Since a hundred people could not be accommodated in his room, we brought him outdoors. He wished to be placed under that mango tree where he had meditated for so many years. A group of disciples and friends surrounded him.

In the open he seemed better, his unshaven face did not look so white. He lifted his eyes and gazed at us slowly; not the least one of us all was hastily passed over. Each one received his message, so far as he could interpret the great glance cast upon him. Then the Holy One spoke:

"The call has come, my children. I must go.

No lamentation. I have taken you upon my back; I shall not drop you into the ditch on my way Home; you shall be in His house with me. To be afraid is vile; therefore, fear not! Even the ultimate sin cannot touch the fearless.

"Whatever I took from my master, I in turn pass on to you. I leave behind me for you all that he taught; I take nothing with me; all knowledge, all benediction, I lay here at my feet for you; spring from it into the Infinite!"

He ceased, and we saw that he was in great pain.

Suddenly, he said:

"I am in haste," and chanted out:

"Kamasya Yatrapta
Kamastatra Mam
Amritam Krisi."

signing to all of us to chant with him. But his voice was soon drowned under the cry of a hundred men and women:

"Make me immortal,
There, where all are vestured in light.
There, where no longing is,
For all longing has been stilled by fulfilment."

Our love had surrounded him like a fence, and

he could not depart or free himself from the entanglement of our affection, so he had commanded us to chant, and as the intoning engulfed us—*Om Hari Om*—and our hold relaxed, he slipped through our loosened grasp. Suddenly, as a sword falls through the air, silence fell upon our chanting. . . He was gone! His face, which was always so full of expression, now lay expressionless and white. His eyes were closed. His mouth grew hard and rigid. The morning breeze trembled through his hair for a moment.

We anointed the corpse with pure sandal oil, covered it with hand-made homespun silk of ochre color, then carried it, cot and all, on our shoulders to the burning Ghaut. The nuns that followed the bier went softly behind the carriers.

It seemed that all Benares had heard the news, but how I do not know. Other men and women, holy also, had already gathered at the Ghaut, and the old lady, who taught that All is nothing, that truculent old man who cried there is no God —both of them had reached the Ghaut before us. Flowers poured from all directions as we went our way. It was overwhelming.

Now it is a law in Benares that if a Holy One dies in the sacred city he is not cremated. His naked body is thrown into currents of the river, to be borne to the sea. A holy body must be given

to the holy Ganges. Even the flames are too impure for it:

"Prehi, prehi
Pathivi purbervi."

"Go, go on the path of ancient mystery!"

As the old words rang out, the river received him in her arms and swiftly bore him from our sight. We gazed and gazed at the flowers that floated after till they too were lost in the blue distance like bubbles in the sea.

After our ablutions and prayers, we returned to the monastery. Now that he was gone, we must remember his injunction to shed no tears. When a holy one departs this life, there can be no official or unofficial mourning. So as soon as we could gather our forces of self-control together, we gave a feast of rejoicing to all Benares. Pilgrims, priests, holy men, beggars, and Rajahs, seven thousand or more came and sang the praise of God. His light shone on all faces and his essence danced in every heart. "In every human being I am the expected flush upon his face."

And then at last I was no longer alone. Peace returned to my heart with the light from the eyes of my brothers.

The following week, I set out on another pil-

grimage to the New World. What had I found to bring back with me—what offering from India in upheaval to America in the heyday of her prosperity? Only the ancient sweet spices and myrrh, only the old incense of love; but my orders were plain, and with joy and assurance I turned again to the West.

I bade good-bye to my brother; his face is with me now. Next to the Holy One, his is most sacred to me.

As for the last time I took the dust from his feet and put it on my head, he said simply: "Finish thy quest. Remember the warning of the Holy One. Criticise no more! Buddha blessed the world, and in blessing gave new life. There the miracle!—Farewell. . . . But come back again and bring to us in our turn the face of blessing and benediction from the West."

I kept looking back at my brother as my train moved out of Benares, and for the first time in my life, I beheld tears in his eyes. Then all was lost to view—but no—for now on the western horizon I saw dimly, but ever growing more and more clear before me, the beloved Face of my Brother.

THE END

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